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Cultural Models of Shyness and Parenting Among Local and Immigrant Mothers in Hong Kong

Jia Li Liu, PhD

University of Connecticut, 2018

Children develop within a complex system of relationships that are affected by their own unique dispositions (e.g. temperament) and by the surrounding environment, including culture. Traditional Chinese culture is influenced by Confucian and Taoist philosophies, which promote self-restraint and discourage self-promotion and individualism (King & Bond, 1985). Until recently, shy behaviors were valued and associated with indices of child adjustment (Chen, Rubin, & Sun, 1992). However, in recent years as China becomes increasingly westernized, there has been an observed shift away from the preference for shyness, with confidence, sociability, and self-assertion becoming highly regarded (Hou, Chen, & Chen, 2005). Researchers also suggest that shyness in the Chinese context may encompass three types: anxious shyness, regulated shyness, and shyness towards strangers (Xu, Farver, Yu, & Zhang, 2009). However, little is known about how mothers conceptualize these three types, and how parenting of shy children might differ between local Hong Kong and Mainland immigrant caregivers.

This three-manuscript mixed-methods dissertation utilizes the developmental niche framework (Super & Harkness, 1986) to understand Chinese cultural models of shyness and parenting. Semi-structured interviews, vignettes, and surveys were collected from 116 mothers ($M_{\text{age}} = 37.91$, $SD = 4.00$) of shy kindergarten children residing in the Kowloon and New Territories districts. The first manuscript examines mothers' understanding of the three shy profiles and their prevalence. The second manuscript investigates parenting (e.g. autonomy support and psychological control) and temperamental (e.g. inhibitory control and attentional

focusing) correlates of anxious and regulated shyness types. Finally, the third manuscript explores the developmental goals and socialization strategies of Hong Kong local and Mainland immigrant mothers of shy children. These three studies contribute to our understanding of culture-specific forms of shyness and offer possible avenues for parenting interventions with Chinese parents of shy children.

Keywords: shyness, culture, parenting, ethnotheories, developmental niche, Hong Kong, immigrant, child development, socialization

Cultural Models of Shyness and Parenting Among Local and Immigrant Mothers in Hong Kong

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B.A., University of Connecticut, 2009

M.A., University of Connecticut, 2015

A Dissertation

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at the

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APPROVAL PAGE

Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation

Cultural Models of Shyness and Parenting Among Local and Immigrant Mothers in Hong Kong

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Really great people make you feel that you, too, can become great. –Mark Twain

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DISSERTATION INTRODUCTION

The study of shyness in young children began when early researchers Jean Piaget (1932) and Margaret Mead (1934) reasoned that the development of the self and others emerged in the context of early peer interactions (see Rubin & Coplan, 2010 for full review). Through these social experiences, children learn another's point of view including: understanding others' feelings, skills in negotiation, and the anticipation of the consequences of their actions (Kerr, 2000). When children lack understanding about interpersonal relationships, maladaptive social behaviors may emerge. Therefore, although initial observations were focused on children who were socially competent, in recent decades, a burgeoning literature has emerged on a subset of shy children who refrain from social participation and thus, whose social development is assumed to be impaired (see Rubin & Coplan, 2010, for a complete review). In children, shyness is characterized by timid and withdrawn behavior when exposed to new people (Plomin & Daniels, 1986) and may manifest in the display of reticent behaviors including a form of non-social play that involves the prolonged watching of other children without accompanying play and parallel play behaviors where the shy child plays next to but does not engage with other children (Coplan, 2000; Asendorpf, 1993). Shyness has also been linked to the construct of behavioral inhibition (Kagan, Reznick, Clark, Snidman, & Garcia-Coll, 1984). Behavioral inhibition refers to the subset of 10-15% of young children who react strongly and negatively to novel things, places, people and situations, through displays of fear and distress and attempts to avoid or withdraw (Kagan, Reznick, & Snidman, 1988). This temperament trait with its unique physiological underpinnings is seen as an early predictor of shyness and is believed to be relatively stable over time, especially at the extreme end (Gest 1997; Kagan, Reznick, & Snidman, 1988). Interestingly, the prevalence rates of behavioral inhibition differ cross-

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culturally implying that parents from different societies vary in their childrearing goals and practices, which in turn produce culturally preferred phenotypes in their offspring (Kohnstamm, 1989). In collectivistic societies like China or South Korea, parents may value reservedness, obedience, compliance, and a collectivistic spirit (Rubin et al., 2006). Consequently, caregivers may interpret these traits as signs of self-restraint, cautiousness, and cooperation (Harkness & Super, 1999). However, in individualistic societies like Australia and the United States, wary, cautious, and inhibited inclinations tend to be regarded as socially immature, incompetent and psychologically maladaptive (Rubin, Burgess, & Coplan, 2002).

Whereas shyness has been associated with indexes of maladjustment such as low social status in school, lower self-perceptions, higher anxiety levels, social phobia, and impaired parent-child relations in Western settings like North America (Eisenberg, Shepard, Fabes, Murphy, & Guthrie, 1998; Leary, 2001; Fordham & Stevenson-Hinde, 1999; LoBue & Edgar, 2014; Kiang, Moreno, & Robinson, 2004); the opposite has held true in China. Until recently, inhibited and shy behaviors were valued (Chen, Rubin, & Sun, 1992) and associated with positive child outcomes such as leadership, teacher-rated competence, and academic achievement (Chen, Wang & Wang, 2009). However, in contemporary China there has been an observed shift away from the cultural preference for shyness, with traits such as confidence and self-assertion becoming more highly regarded (Hou, Chen, & Chen, 2005). Researchers also contend that shyness in the Chinese context may be nuanced. They propose three culturally specific forms of shyness: *shyness with strangers*, *anxious shyness* and *regulated shyness* (Xu, Farver, Yu, & Zhang, 2009).

The Current Dissertation

This exploratory mixed methods dissertation consists of three manuscripts, each focusing on a unique aspect of shyness and parental socialization in urban Hong Kong. One of the primary aims of all three papers is to explore immigrant status differences in maternal ethnotheories in shyness and mothers' related caregiving practices. The first manuscript examines mothers' understanding of the three shy profiles and their prevalence. The second manuscript investigates parenting (e.g. autonomy support and psychological control) and temperamental (e.g. inhibitory control and attentional focusing) correlates of anxious and regulated shyness types. Finally, the third manuscript explores the developmental goals and socialization strategies of Hong Kong local and Mainland immigrant mothers of shy children. We use Super & Harkness (2002) definition of culture as the organization of the developmental environment (Super & Harkness, 1986). The developmental niche framework guides all three papers. Under this framework, three interacting subsystems – the physical and social settings (e.g. ecological context, environmental and social resources of the family), historically constituted customs and practices of childrearing (e.g. parenting behaviors that are typical within a community), and the psychology of the caretakers (including shared beliefs and ethnotheories) – jointly contribute to child outcomes. Through the powerful but incomplete coordination of the three subsystems, children absorb and internalize the social, affective, and cognitive rules of a culture and respond in ways that are culturally acceptable (Super and Harkness, 1986).

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ABSTRACT

According to the developmental niche framework (Super & Harkness, 1986), parents' cultural beliefs (e.g. ethnotheories) affect children's development by influencing parental behavior (Cheah & Rubin, 2004). Concurrently, children's temperaments shape their social interactions. Shyness is wariness and anxiety when faced with social novelty and perceived social evaluation (Coplan et al., 2007) and is associated with mixed developmental outcomes in China. Confucianism emphasizes self-restraint and shy children were viewed as polite, respectful, and non-confrontational (Xu et al., 2007). These children benefited from peer acceptance and school adjustment until the 1990s (Chen et al., 1995). However, socioeconomic changes and westernization resulted in the valuing of confidence and assertiveness. Shyness now predicts youth loneliness and depression (Hou, Chen, & Chen, 2005; Chen, Yang, & Wang, 2013). Shyness in China may also encompass at least three types (Xu et al., 2007). Shyness toward strangers reflects fear and inhibition toward unfamiliar adults. Anxious shyness stems from sensitivity to negative social evaluation and conflicting approach and avoidance motivations. Lastly, regulated shyness reflects modest, unassuming, and self-controlled social restraint. This study examined maternal ethnotheories of shyness in Hong Kong - a city that blends Chinese roots with Western influences.

Seventy-three local-born ($M_{\text{age}} = 38.14$, $SD = 3.77$) and 33 Mainland immigrant Chinese mothers ($M_{\text{age}} = 37.73$, $SD = 4.58$) of shy kindergarten children were presented with hypothetical vignettes about protagonist children who demonstrated behaviors congruent with the three-factor model (Xu et al., 2009). Mothers were asked to provide causal explanations, adjectives, and views of typicality/normality. We expected that immigrant mothers would perceive shy behaviors as more acceptable and typical due to less Western influence from the mainstream

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culture. Two researchers established inter-rater agreement and analyzed interview data using principles of thematic analysis (McClelland, 1975) and "open coding" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Additionally, themes were calculated as proportions for each group and chi-square analyses were conducted to determine local and immigrant differences.

Similarities and differences emerged in mothers' descriptors of the three shyness types. "Shy", "timid" and "fearful" were used to describe all three; "slow to warm up" was used only for anxious shyness and "obedient" and "low-profile" for regulated shyness. Contrary to our hypothesis, immigrant mothers were more likely to view shyness toward strangers as abnormal ($X^2(1, N = 106) = 6.03, p = .01, \phi_c = .24$) and atypical ($X^2(1, N = 106) = 14.71, p = .000, \phi_c = .37$). Narratives shed light on these discrepancies where immigrant mothers indicated that local children enjoy ample social activities and are taught to be assertive. Mixed positive and negative descriptors for regulated shyness highlighted the complexity of mothers' attitudes, providing evidence of the cultural shift away from shyness. Finally, mothers' emphasis on familial influences as a causal factor suggests a cultural orientation towards the malleability of child temperament. These findings represent a major step in understanding Chinese ethnotheories of shyness. Additionally, that immigrant mothers viewed social wariness as abnormal and atypical underscores the need to provide families with resources to address perceived worrisome child behaviors.

INTRODUCTION

Even when a girl is as shy as a mouse, you still have to beware of the tiger within.
—Chinese proverb

Understanding shyness in the Chinese context has been of great interest to researchers as of late, given its long-rooted history in Confucian thought and nuanced meaning. In western societies, shy children experience social challenges such as loneliness, social phobia, greater rates of anxiety, low self-esteem, depressive symptoms, internalizing problems, and peer and school difficulties (Chavira, Stein, & Malcarne, 2002; Rubin, Coplan, & Bowker, 2009). However, in the Chinese context, the same behavioral profile predicts teacher-rated competence, popularity with peers, and academic achievement (Chen, Wang & Wang, 2009). Traditional Chinese culture is heavily influenced by Confucian and Taoist philosophies, which promote self-restraint and discourage self-promotion and individualism (King & Bond, 1985). Inhibited and shy behaviors were valued (Chen, Rubin, & Sun, 1992). However, westernization coupled with a market-oriented economy has led to confidence and self-assertion becoming more highly regarded with shy behaviors becoming maladaptive (Hou, Chen, & Chen, 2005). Researchers also suggest that shyness in the Chinese context may encompass at least three culturally specific forms: anxious shyness, regulated shyness, and shyness towards strangers. Little is known as to how these unique shy profiles are perceived in a unique setting like Hong Kong, a territory where East meets West. The present study utilized three vignettes to explore how local and Mainland immigrant Chinese mothers in Hong Kong understand these three types.

Defining Shyness and Its Causes

Shyness is a multidimensional phenomenon, involving motivational, emotional, personal, and interpersonal processes (Rubin & Coplan, 2010). Although 90% of the population report

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experiencing feeling shy at one point or another (Zimbardo, 1977), temperamental shyness (or behavioral inhibition) is understood to be an early developing, moderately stable trait that shows consistency across unfamiliar interaction partners (Asendorpf, 1993). Behavioral inhibition is characterized by wariness to unfamiliar stimuli, as shown through the tendency to react strongly and negatively to novel things, places, people, and situations, and through displays of fear and distress and attempts to avoid or withdraw (Kagan, Reznick, & Snidman, 1988). In laboratory and parent reports, 10-15% of children were found to withdraw from unfamiliar events and people. When confronted with such challenges, these children ceased their play behavior and sought the proximity of their caregivers. They remained vigilant of their surroundings and rarely approached novel objects or unfamiliar people (Kagan, Reznick, & Snidman, 1988).

In Western literature, temperamental fear is believed to portend shyness and behavioral inhibition, and can be assessed by parental reports as early as 3 months (Gartstein & Rothbart, 2003) and measured behaviorally in four-month-old infants (Kagan, Snidman, Kahn, & Towsley, 2007). Some evidence also suggests physiological underpinnings of temperamental shyness, including lower heart period (HP) corresponding to higher heart rates, and larger decreases in HP (i.e. heart rate acceleration) in response to unfamiliarity (Fox, Henderson, Marshall, Nicols, & Ghera, 2005). Early birth weight (Schmidt, Miskovic, Boyle, & Saigal, 2008), larger amygdala and caudate volume (Clauss et al., 2014), and high baseline cortisol levels (Kagan, Reznick, & Snidman, 1997) have also been implicated. Other temperament perspectives have linked the approach-avoidance motivation to the development of this trait. Thomas and Chess' (1977) conceptualized approach responses as positive mood expression and motor activity (e.g., smiling, reaching for a new toy) and avoidance reactions as their negative counterparts (e.g., crying,

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moving away). Cognitive researchers, on the other hand, attribute shyness to cognitive appraisal processes. Shy individuals are often believed to have a preoccupation of the self during real or imagined social situations (Jones, Briggs, & Cheek, 1986) and hold feelings of negative self-worth (Crozier, 1981).

Although research on the causal factors and developmental implications of shyness has seldom been carried out in Eastern contexts, existing literature reflects an alternative view to Western ones. For example, Feng (2005) found that although Chinese parents of kindergarteners viewed shyness unfavorably, they also viewed the trait as attributable to external causes and thus highly malleable to parental intervention. Additional research on mothers' cultural beliefs about shyness in Mainland China lends further credibility to that view. Semi-structured interviews with urban Chinese mothers revealed their belief that shyness emerges when children are infrequently exposed to social experiences (Liu, Harkness, & Super, 2018). Therefore, shyness is perceived to be modifiable through warm parent-child relationships, increased communication, and exposure to novelty. Nuanced vocabulary for shy constructs (e.g. shy with strangers, introversion, shyness) in China reflects equally complex concepts. Xu, Farver, Yu, and Zhang (2009) propose three forms of shyness specific to the Chinese context: shyness toward strangers, anxious shyness, and regulated shyness. Shyness toward strangers is characterized by fearful and inhibited behavior toward unfamiliar adults and/or peers and reflects individual variation in reactions to unexpected changes in the environment much like behavioral inhibition. Anxious shyness refers to shyness that occurs in familiar peer contexts and is manifested as anxious withdrawal from playgroups and an avoidance of social contact. This type is most similar to the North American conceptualization where individuals are likely to be sensitive to negative social evaluation, and

observed reticent behaviors are the result of an internal conflict between approach and avoidance motivations (Xu et al., 2007). Lastly, regulated shyness refers to a more culturally unique form. Here, self-controlled social restraint is characterized by non-assertive and unassuming behavior. Regulated shy individuals are typically modest, polite, and attentive to the needs of others—preferring to concede and/or reconcile when faced with peer conflict or confrontation. Instead of being driven by the approach-avoidance motivational conflict, these individuals are motivated by the desire to fit in (Xu et al., 2007). Factor analyses distinguished the uniqueness of the latter two forms where regulated shyness was positively correlated with peer acceptance and anxious shyness was associated with social anxiety and peer rejection (Xu et al., 2007). This alternative lens to understanding shyness in China warrants further exploration.

The Current Study

There is research that suggests that shyness is more prevalent in China compared to Western contexts (Rubin et al., 2006). In collectivistic societies like China, parents may value reservedness, obedience, compliance, and a collectivistic spirit. Consequently, caregivers may interpret these traits as signs of self-restraint, cautiousness, and cooperation (Super & Harkness, 1999) and reinforce shy and reticent behaviors. Although shyness has gone out of favor in urban Chinese communities, this trait continues to be associated with indexes of adjustment such as leadership, teacher-rated competence, and academic achievement in rural settings (Chen, Wang & Wang, 2009).

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In the midst of enormous political, social, and economic change and high rates of immigration from Mainland China to Hong Kong, little is known about how these forms are conceptualized and how typical they are perceived to be in young children. The current study utilizes Xu and colleagues' (2009) three types of shyness framework to explore these questions. Hong Kong is an ideal setting to explore this cultural shift. Mainland immigrant families make up 20% of the city's population ("1.5 million mainland migrants change Hong Kong", 2017) and they live in different sociocultural contexts compared to their local, more affluent peers. The average monthly income of immigrant households is only 40% of that for all households in Hong Kong (Home Affairs Department and Immigrant Department, 2015). Many immigrants originate from rural communities where perceptions of shyness subscribe to traditional ideals. Based on previous research, we predicted that Hong Kong local mothers would view shyness as abnormal and atypical, whereas immigrant mothers would perceive the opposite. Anxious shyness and shyness toward strangers would be viewed negatively. In contrast, regulated shyness would be viewed favorably.

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

Recruitment flyers were distributed to local kindergartens and one non-governmental organization (NGO) in the Kowloon and New Territories districts of Hong Kong.

The study was part of a larger study on maternal ethnotheories and socialization of children's shyness. Three hundred and fifty-nine "reply and referral" slips were received. Research assistants contacted interested families and administered a 10-minute screener to determine eligibility. Inclusion criteria included: ethnically Chinese mothers of typically developing

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kindergarten children (i.e. no significant pre-, peri-, or postnatal health problems); mothers of children who are “more” shy and/or fearful and inhibited around strangers than typical same-age peers; mothers who identify as primary caregivers; and Mainland immigrant mothers who were born and raised in China but immigrated to Hong Kong as adults (>13 years old) or Chinese mothers who were born and raised as local Hong Kong citizens. From this screening process, one hundred and sixty one families did not qualify (e.g. mother rated their child as average or non-shy or did not meet demographics requirements), 18 qualified but declined to participate, and 66 were unable to be reached. Of the original sample, eight mothers were excluded from this current analysis due to a sibling participating in which case one child was randomly selected ($n=2$), a mother disclosing at data collection that her child had a severe speech and language disorder ($n=1$), and due to missing data ($n=5$). The final sample presented here was one hundred and six mothers.

The divided sample consisted of 73 local Hong Kong ($M_{\text{age}} = 38.14$, $SD = 3.77$) and 33 Mainland immigrant mothers ($M_{\text{age}} = 37.73$, $SD = 4.58$) of kindergarten children. Immigrant mothers arrived to Hong Kong anywhere between 1 to 28 years ($M_{\text{years}} = 8.29$, $SD = 6.93$). Their children were either born in Mainland China or in Hong Kong. The two groups were not significantly different in mothers’ age, child gender distribution (55% male in immigrant group; 52% male in local group) or marital status (all except four mothers were married). Independent samples t-tests revealed a significant difference between immigrant ($M_{\text{immigrant child age}} = 4.88$, $SD = .68$) and local children’s age ($M_{\text{local child age}} = 5.24$, $SD = .66$); $t(104) = -2.54$, $p = .013$. Local and immigrant families were significantly different in household monthly income $t(104)$, $p = .000$. The mean family monthly income for the immigrant group was slightly above 10,000-30,000HKD and

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slightly under 50,000-80,000HKD for local mothers. For reference, the median Hong Kong monthly household income is 24,900HKD (Census and Statistics Department, 2016). Mother's education also differed significantly between the two groups ($t(104)$, $p=.000$) with immigrant mothers having a mean education level between middle and high school and local mothers having attained at least an undergraduate degree. These demographics are typical based on the Hong Kong population.

On the day of data collection, research assistants who were fluent in the parents' preferred language (Cantonese or Mandarin) administered the vignettes in the participants' homes, a public place (e.g. library, park, café) or the university laboratory. The University Institutional Review Boards from the host (The Chinese University of Hong Kong) and home university (The University of Connecticut) approved the study and parents provided their written consent prior to data collection. All data was collected between January - July 2017.

Measures

Family demographics questionnaire. Demographic characteristics of participating families (results reported above) were assessed using a questionnaire distributed on the day of data collection.

Shyness vignettes.

Mothers were presented with three vignettes (see Appendix A) in which two protagonist children displayed shy towards strangers, regulated shy, or anxious shy behaviors as based on previous literature (Xu, Farver, Yu & Zhang, 2009). The genders of the protagonist children were matched to

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the gender of the participants' children. In the first vignette, shyness towards strangers, two focal children are at a local park with their mothers when an unfamiliar park attendant comes by to greet them. The children hid behind their mothers and refused to make eye contact. The second vignette, regulated shyness, took place in a kindergarten classroom. The classroom teacher asked the students to sit quietly on the rug while a music teacher holds an enticing bag of instruments. The majority of children rushed forward to steal glances into the bag, but one child walks deliberately and slowly and sits down without commotion. During the lesson, she is careful not to drown out the other students' instrument playing with her own. In the final vignette, shyness with strangers, the second target child stood a distance away from the others and only joined the music lesson after being directed by the teacher. During the lesson, the child is frozen in place and plays her instrument so softly - it is inaudible. Following each vignettes, mothers were asked, "Why do you think the child(ren) behaved this way?" "What adjectives would you use to describe this child(ren)?" and "Is this behavior normal and typical in Hong Kong children?" Mothers' responses were audio recorded, transcribed, and translated from Chinese to English by trained bilingual research assistants.

Data Analysis

Coding of data.

The vignettes were analyzed both qualitatively using the online qualitative research program, Dedoose© (Version 7.6.21) and quantitatively using SPSS version 25 (IBM, Armonk, NY). To overcome the limitations of a single design, a mixed methods approach was employed. The qualitative data was analyzed using principles of thematic analysis (McClelland, 1975) and "open coding" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). First, two authors read and reread a sample of 30 interviews to ensure thorough comprehension. Data were coded into initial themes generated

from the data. These themes and attached data were discussed and agreed upon by two of the authors. Final themes were then combined as appropriate. For example, the theme of “fearful” was combined with all related synonyms (e.g. afraid, frightened). Only themes that 15% of mothers in either group mentioned were included in the analyses.

Statistical analysis.

Most mothers answered most questions. Frequencies of each code were calculated as a percentage for each theme/descriptor, for each group (i.e. immigrant and local). Chi-square analyses were conducted to determine the statistical significance of the differences between the groups. Effect sizes (i.e. Cramer’s V) were reported for statistically significant results.

RESULTS

Themes about Shyness with Strangers

In describing the shy with strangers profile, immigrant and local mothers held similar views that this type of children are considered pa chou (a Cantonese term denoting shyness and bashfulness), fearful, and normal (see Table 1). Pa chou (shyness) was the most common descriptor eliciting 62% of local and 46% of immigrant mothers’ responses. When mothers were asked to elaborate about what being shy entailed, they described a child who is wary of social interactions. One local mother of a six-year-old boy explained:

Pa chou (shyness) is being afraid to stand in front of someone. That is, with everything they need to hide behind in the back. They are very fearful – you need to ask before they will talk. They will not take the initiative.

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Mothers also believed that this behavior is developmentally normative in young children as this immigrant mother of a three-year-old boy stated:

I think [their behavior] is normal, because they are only two years old, but if they are three or four years old and they still act like that, then that's not normal...I think this is a natural reaction... very natural.

Mothers' beliefs about the high prevalence rate of such behavior also contributed to their views.

As one local mother of a four-year-old said, "[This behavior] is typical to the point where one thinks it's normal".

Where the two groups differed was in the use of the adjective "timid". Mainland Chinese immigrant mothers used this adjective more as compared to their local counterparts ($X^2(1, N = 106) = 12.18, p = .001$, Cramer's $V = .34$). Twenty four percent of immigrant mothers described children who are shy with strangers as lacking a sense of security, which then results in self-protective, timid behavior. This immigrant mother of a three-year-old boy explicated:

[They are] timid... They are used to having mom and dad protect them so when they encountered an unfamiliar person – they don't know how to handle it. They don't know how to interact with him.

With regard to mothers' attributions about the causes for shyness towards strangers, we found no significant group differences (see Table 2). The top reasons that mothers gave for the children's behaviors were: unfamiliarity with strangers, fearfulness, pa chou (shyness), family influences, and lack of experience. In the fast-paced society of Hong Kong, mothers believed that the typical child should have ample opportunity to encounter similar situations as the one in the vignette. Young children often interact with unfamiliar others in parks and other public settings. Thus,

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shyness towards strangers may be caused by lack of social experience. When asked to explain her reasoning further, one local mother of a four-year-old girl discussed:

There are so many things to do [in Hong Kong]. If you have more life experience, you try more. For example, if you learn how to say a few more words then your own self-confidence is stronger. But if you don't experience much, if you see something new then you are scared. If every day there is something new, a new game, a new toy, then even if you see a new person, you will be more courageous.

The causes of children's shyness towards strangers were rarely attributed to children's own internal characteristics (e.g. temperament). Rather, both local and immigrant mothers saw children's fearfulness and shyness as a result of external factors. This included lack of experiences provided by the family. One immigrant mother of a four-year-old boy explained how social conditions contributed to this behavioral profile:

I see currently there isn't much communication and connection. Everyone is playing with their e-products like Ipad, no one would really answer peoples' question face-to-face; they wouldn't give a response. Usually parents need to work so mostly he would stay at home with the domestic helper and they rarely respond to the children. So the children learn from that.

Similarly, a local mother of a five-year-old girl surmised:

They [children] see people infrequently. Maybe mommy does not frequently take them out to see people therefore, when they see unfamiliar people like the security attendant, they will be scared.

Table 3 highlights mothers' views about the normality and typicality of the three shyness profiles. Forty five percent of local mothers and 39% of immigrant mothers viewed shyness with strangers as typical behavior for young children. This was not statistically significant. However, the percentage of mothers viewing such behavior as atypical differed between the two groups. Only three percent of local mothers said being shy with strangers is atypical in Hong Kong compared to over one fourth of immigrant mothers ($X^2(1, N = 106) = 14.71, p = .000$, Cramer's

$V=.37$). In the same vein, more immigrant mothers viewed shyness with strangers as abnormal ($X^2(1, N = 106) = 6.03, p = .01$, Cramer's $V=.24$) whereas local mothers viewed it as normal ($X^2(1, N = 106) = 5.75, p = .02$, Cramer's $V=.23$). This discrepancy can partially be explained in immigrant mothers' narratives. Immigrant mothers held the assumption that local Hong Kong children are generally polite and assertive when it comes to interacting with unfamiliar others. Two separate immigrant mothers of five-year-old children revealed:

I think that Hong Kong children have very good manners. They take the initiative to greet someone. I think these two are unlike [Hong Kong children] because I think Hong Kong children are courageous. They take the initiative to greet others.

In Hong Kong, I don't think it's normal – right? It's because in Hong Kong – there are many activities. They interact with outside people often– those [children] are generally bolder.

In contrast, close to seventy percent of local mothers believed this trait was normal. Many local mothers pointed out the protective benefits of being shy with strangers, as this local mother of a four-year-old boy did:

Yes [it is normal] because you don't know if he is good person or not...I think to some degree, they [children] would be aware of being cautious about strangers. Parents would tell the children, "If you meet with a stranger, don't follow them. If they give candy to you, don't take it... so I think children have the crisis awareness...I think it is normal in Hong Kong.

Themes about Regulated Shyness

The mothers in our study used a variety of adjectives to describe the behaviors of our regulated shy protagonist (see Table 1). Over one third of the participants in both groups labeled these children as obedient. Other popular adjectives included low profile (i.e. avoiding attracting others' attention), shy, observant, disciplined, introverted, cautious, timid, and fearful. Of these, only one significant group difference was found. A greater number of local mothers (than

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immigrant ones) described our regulated shy protagonist as observant ($X^2(1, N = 106) = 5.44, p = .02$, Cramer's $V = .23$). "I think he [protagonist] would pay attention to the behavior of other children around him before he acts. I think he is a keen observer. Also, he is calm and would not be impatient," a local mother of a four year old child concluded.

Across both groups, regulated shy children were viewed as deliberate, restrained, and much preferring to be a follower rather than leader. This quote from a local mother of a four-year-old girl illustrated this point:

She [protagonist] would be a rule-follower... she is not an outgoing and active child. She is more the type to carefully listen to things and the kind of person who sees and evaluates everything before acting. She is not an impulsive person. She watches others act first and also, she is the type who does not like to be noticed by others.

This mother of a five-year-old boy concurred:

He can control himself well... he really wants to see [what is in front] but he does not go... That means he can... his EQ is relatively high to be able to control himself. He is more introverted and also more passive. He would not take the initiative to go out there and does not like to be noticed by others. He likes to be calm and quiet – to be a follower.

The mix of positive (e.g. obedient, observant, disciplined) and negative (e.g. timid, fearful) descriptors further highlights the complexity of mothers' attitudes towards regulated shy behaviors. Although the protagonist child is seen as well-behaved, some mothers were concerned that these children were overcontrolled and negatively affected by their fears (e.g. of being noticed by others, making a mistake, or being criticized by adults). For example, one local mother of a four-year-old girl described the dangers of being too compliant:

She is very guai [obedient] but also not very healthy psychologically. I think if children are like this – their mentality – then they are afraid to think.... If you drew a circle on the ground and tell her not to cross the circle – it's normal to cross. She will not walk outside [the circle] but even walking closer to the edge, she is afraid to.

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The balance between positive and negative implications is also exemplified in the response left by this local mother of a five-year-old boy. She suggested that our regulated shy protagonist has strong self-discipline, but is also hypersensitive about making mistakes:

He is more passive and he observes calmly. He makes sure he has observed enough and clearly before taking actions. He can control his behavior.... but I think he is a little afraid, like afraid to do things, afraid to end up doing the wrong thing.

Mothers' causal attributions about regulated shyness elicited eight themes (see Table 2). The protagonist child's behavior was attributed to obedience, sensitivity to evaluation, suppression (by family, teacher(s), or oneself), family influences, shyness (*pa chou*), fearfulness, and an observant and/or low profile personality. Among these, chi-square tests revealed only one group difference. A greater number of local Hong Kong mothers believed this child's behavior is the result of a low-profile personality compared to immigrant ones (37% versus 18%; $X^2(1, N = 106) = 3.75, p = .05$, Cramer's $V = .19$). Interestingly, over one fourth (27%) of immigrant mothers viewed family influences or education as the cause of regulated shyness. Whereas the first shyness with strangers vignette elicited mostly comments of negative family contributions - this second one drew more variation. Some immigrant mothers believed this behavioral profile is the result of parents teaching children to be polite, non-confrontational, and/or well behaved in public:

In daily life, the parents will teach them well, and when the child is out, like in a public place, he would behave well. -Immigrant mother of a four-year-old boy

Others though, mention that the child's natural curiosity is being suppressed by overbearing family members as this immigrant mother of a five-year-old boy explained:

If he is like this I think it should be that at home.... Mom and dad's teaching is too harsh. Too harsh because what he [Alexander] wants to do, he suppresses it. There are many

things that he is not allowed to do so he suppresses his own behavior to meet teacher and parents' expectations... He suppresses his own behavior. Originally he wanted to be with the other children running over, even if the teacher yells – he wants to first see [what's in the bag]. In fact, he really wants to see it but the teacher, Mrs. Chen said, "Sit first." He first listened to the teacher's instructions and then evaluated what he wants to really do, the behavior.

Finally, analyses of normality and typicality revealed no significant differences in attitudes between immigrant and local groups. Over forty percent of mothers from both groups viewed regulated shy behaviors as normal, but also atypical and uncommon.

Themes about Anxious Shyness

Seven adjectives emerged in our final vignette on anxious shyness (see Table 1). Mothers from both groups viewed this child as slow to warm up, shy, introverted, fearful, passive, and lacking in confidence. When asked to describe this child, an immigrant mother of a four-year-old girl offered a list of adjectives:

[She is] slow to warm up, timid, pa chou (shy)... Could it be that she is very anxious? She is not relaxed enough... not having enough confidence. If a person has enough confidence, they would not be afraid, right?

Similarly, a local mother of a four-year-old local boy explained:

He is slower to warm up; he needs more time to adjust to a new environment. Maybe... I am not sure if ringing the hand bells is not the [usual] setting for everyday and he needs more time to accept such new environment. Also, Mrs. Chen is new, as you said, so she is new to him...all teacher's instructions are new to him, it takes more time for him to accept it.

Local and immigrant parents alike were concerned about the social development of this child.

The adjective slow-to-warm up was linked to the fear that this child was also slow developmentally or academically. This local mother of a five-year-old boy offered this possibility:

Maybe he can't keep up his academic progress. Maybe it's not just that. Maybe at school, there are other factors. Maybe he cannot keep up so it becomes that when there is a new activity he does not want to participate. It ends up that his self-confidence is not enough so the teacher always has to remind him... it may also be the teacher's attitude. If the teacher is too strict, then this [behavior] will get more intense. He is afraid to do it wrong so he is afraid to do it [altogether]. Also, you need to look at the home and the method [in which] he is raised. I think that if a child's self-confidence is so low, in fact, you must think of strategies to – add to his self-confidence.... Is it the home? Does the home put too much pressure on him? Or is it that his personality is that he likes to play alone? Maybe there is something he is very skilled at but his expertise he is unwilling [to share] in the group... I believe that socially – his development is slower, compared to other children; it is not as good.

Chi-square tests revealed that the only significant group difference in the adjectives that mothers used was for the descriptor, “timid”. Almost forty percent of immigrant mothers described our anxious shy protagonist as being timid or lacking in courage, compared to only 16% of their local counterparts ($X^2 (1, N = 106) = 6.65, p = .01$, Cramer's $V = .25$). This trend continued in mothers' causal attributions of anxious shyness. A greater proportion of immigrant mothers attributed our protagonist's socially wary behaviors to being timid ($X^2 (1, N = 106) = 4.61, p = .03$, Cramer's $V = .21$). The protagonist child did not have courage and hence kept to himself. However, timidity was not exclusively viewed as unfavorable by immigrant parents. This child may be more observant than others or possess a stronger sense of self-protection that may manifest as timidity. These two separate mothers said:

It should be that he is also very timid but his ability to observe is also very strong. I think it is. He notices everything beside him – that is, he will think thoroughly, see thoroughly before acting. –Immigrant mother of a five-year-old boy

He is more protective of himself compared to Christopher [regulated shy child], even more timid. I think this because he chose to stay in the back. At least Christopher is at the center so people would be aware of him. I think this child lacks confidence and he is unfamiliar with people. He does not know how to behave. He needs more time to observe the situation. He is slow to warm up. - Immigrant mother of a five-year-old boy

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Other popular causal attributions for shy with strangers included: slow to warm up, fearful, shy, lack of confidence, unfamiliarity with the environment, anxiety, and family influences (see Table 2). Twenty one percent of local mothers and twelve percent of immigrant mothers understood that anxious shy behavior resulted when parents did not provide adequate social opportunities for the child to gain efficacy over his/her environment (e.g. confidence and positive self-esteem).

Alternatively, parents were overly punitive and controlling as this local mother of a four-year-old girl recounted:

I think it is because she doesn't have any entertainment or activities [and] she has few chance to explore, so it leads to her not being confident about many things. I think it is like that, also, she doesn't know what she should do. She has low confidence, family members rarely encourage her, no one encourages her telling her what is okay, or what behavior is right, or she could be praised by doing something. I think that seldom happens. Also, she doesn't have many people to interact with... it is because of her family. She doesn't have many chances to play with other children, only staying at home. [She] doesn't have access to musical instruments, lacks experience like this, so such children would behave like this.

Although timidity may have some genetic basis, environmental factors can overcome that as this mother discussed:

I think he is born easily frightened, timid, like, he is not an active extroverted person. He is afraid of strangers, very timid.... I am very concerned that my child is like that, so I would take him to somewhere crowded, so that he could fit into the big family, the society.

In terms of parental views of normality and typicality of anxious shy behaviors, no significant group differences emerged (see Table 3). Over fifty percent of mothers from both groups saw this behavior as atypical. Although not statistically meaningful, examining the raw proportions revealed that almost twice the percentage of local mothers (compared to immigrant mothers) viewed this trait as normal (43% compared to 23%).

DISCUSSION

A major goal of the study was to examine local and Mainland immigrant Chinese mothers' conceptualizations of the three forms of shyness. Thematic analyses and chi-square tests revealed significant overlap in the descriptors both groups used to describe the three types of shyness (see Table 1). These shared adjectives included: timid, fearful, and shy. Our vignettes illustrated varied behaviors, yet they were all recognizable to mothers as "shy" behaviors. This suggests that the three types may not have clear boundaries. In a previous study, Xu and colleagues (2009) found that regulated shy children were often shy towards strangers. They behaved in a modest and non-assertive manner to cope with their inhibited temperaments. Future researchers should tease apart the shared and distinct components of each type. It may also be fruitful to explore the role of effortful control in mitigating the negative effects of shyness. Our regulated shy vignette elicited positive descriptors such as obedient, observant, and disciplined, alongside negative ones (e.g. timid, fearful). Future research should assess whether effortful control processes (e.g., inhibitory control, attentional focusing) moderate and/or mediate the relationship between temperamental shyness and psychosocial outcomes in Chinese children. Elucidating this relationship may help to explain some of the mixed results found previously.

Although several similarities emerged in mothers' responses to the three types of shyness, distinct cultural models were also evident. For example, "obedient" and "sensitive to evaluation" were used to describe regulated shyness only, and "slow to warm up" was used exclusively to describe anxious shyness. Contradictory to Xu and colleagues' (2009) model, we found that sensitivity to evaluation was related to regulated shyness, instead of anxious shyness. Mothers' views about shyness towards strangers and anxious shyness were mostly negative (as can be

inferred from their narratives), except some comments about the protective value of being wary in new situations and being observant. We found much greater variation in mothers' reactions to regulated shyness, which may reflect the changing meaning of shyness in Chinese culture. The top descriptor for the regulated shy child was "obedient", but less than 15% of mothers mentioned adjectives relating to cooperation and the desire to fit in, which is a basic component of the regulated shyness model (Xu et al., 2009). Previous literature describes regulated shyness as characterized by unassuming, acquiescent, and unassertive behavior (Xu, Farver, Yu, & Zhang, 2009). Mothers' mention of the regulated shy child being "low profile" fits this definition, though we found group differences in the mention of this term (see Tables 2).

Shyness toward strangers was viewed as the most typical type of shyness among the three vignettes, with 45% of local and 39% of immigrant mothers believing it to be typical. However, we discovered that a greater proportion of our immigrant sample viewed shyness towards strangers as abnormal and atypical compared to local mothers who viewed this profile as normal (see Table 3). We hypothesized that the opposite would be true given the rural backgrounds of many of our immigrant mothers. To account for this surprising finding, we surmise that immigrant parents may be more distressed about their children's shyness and overestimate the prevalence of assertiveness and extroversion in local Hong Kong children. A separate earlier analysis using this same sample found that a higher proportion of Mainland immigrant mothers (compared to local ones) named social competence and less shy behaviors as important developmental goals. Together, this information offers potential for parenting interventions with low-income, immigrant Chinese families.

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We found that Mainland immigrant mothers more often used the term “timid” to describe shyness towards strangers and anxious shyness behaviors compared to local mothers. Children’s timidity and lack of courage was often seen as an outcome of environmental circumstances. This may include controlling and demanding parents, parents’ failure to provide psychological security, and/or lack of opportunities for children to experience unfamiliar settings and meet new people. In explaining why the shy towards strangers protagonists behaved that way, an immigrant mother of a four-year-old boy explained:

First maybe they have seen people relatively infrequently. Second, because it is an unfamiliar person, they don’t have much of a sense of security. Also, mom and dad had told them at home, “You have to be careful with strangers. There are bad people.” That’s why they are more scared. I think these are the reasons.

This emphasis on parental teaching in the development of shyness is consistent with research that found Chinese parents were more likely to focus on the external (rather than internal) influences on the development of child personality (Ho, 1986). Moreover, Chinese parents subscribe to the cultural model of *guanjiao* (“to govern and to educate/teach”; Chen-Bouck, Duan, & Patterson, 2017). Parents are responsible for inculcating the values that would maximize their child’s success. In Chinese society, children’s failure reflects parents’ failure. This may explain why many parents suggested certain parenting strategies (e.g. bringing the child out more) as solutions to changing our shy protagonists’ behaviors.

Limitations and Future Research

This current study represents an initial step in understanding how Mainland immigrant and local Chinese mothers in Hong Kong understand the three profiles of shyness, but there are several limitations that must be addressed. While we assessed immigrant status group differences in

mothers' responses to these vignettes, we did not vary the protagonist children's characteristics in the stories (e.g. child gender, age, other temperament dimensions). These factors may play an important role in mothers' interpretations. Additionally, we did not probe mothers' for specific socialization practices for each hypothetical child in the current study. Moreover, our sample consisted of only shy children and we cannot make generalizations as to how parents' understanding of shyness may differ with parents of average and non-shy children. Finally, our design was cross-sectional and did not explore how prevalence rates and views of normality and typicality towards shyness have changed in response to recent political, economic, and cultural change in Chinese societies. Longitudinal research following cohorts of anxious, regulated, and shy toward strangers Chinese children across the lifespan would allow researchers to understand their developmental trajectories. Future studies should explore how and which parenting practices have changed in recent decades – and get teachers' and children's perspectives as well. By answering these questions, we will be better suited to create interventions that will enhance shy Chinese children's development.

TABLE 1

Mothers' Adjectives for Vignettes				
Mothers' Vignettes Adjectives	% of mothers (N=106)		Statistical significance ^b	Cramer's V
	Hong Kong local mothers ^a (n=73)	Mainland immigrant mothers ^a (n=33)		
Shyness with Strangers				
Shy	62%	46%	n.s.	.34
Fearful	32%	46%	n.s.	
Normal	27%	27%	n.s.	
Timid	3%	24%	<i>p</i> =.001	
Regulated Shyness				
Obedient	41%	39%	n.s.	.23
Low profile	22%	18%	n.s.	
Shy	21%	18%	n.s.	
Observant	21%	3%	<i>p</i> =.02*	
Disciplined	15%	15%	n.s.	
Introverted	14%	24%	n.s.	
Cautious	14%	15%	n.s.	
Timid	11%	21%	n.s.	
Fearful	10%	21%	n.s.	
Anxious Shyness				
Slow to warm up	37%	49%	n.s.	.25
Shy	33%	27%	n.s.	
Lacks confidence	29%	30%	n.s.	
Fearful	22%	21%	n.s.	
Timid	16%	39%	<i>p</i> =.01	
Introverted	12%	15%	n.s.	
Passive	12%	15%	n.s.	

*Fisher's Exact Test Statistic

TABLE 2
Mothers' Shyness Causal Attributions

Mothers' Shyness Causal Attributions				
	% of mothers (N=106)			
Mothers' Causal Attributions	Hong Kong local mothers ^a (n=73)	Mainland immigrant mothers ^a (n=33)	Statistical significance ^b	Cramer's V
Shyness with Strangers				
Does not know attendant	55%	36%	n.s.	
Fearful	53%	68%	n.s.	
Shy	45%	46%	n.s.	
Family influences	32%	39%	n.s.	
Lack of experience	18%	27%	n.s.	
Regulated Shyness				
Obedient	37%	33%	n.s.	
Low profile	37%	18%	p=.05	.19
Sensitive to evaluation	34%	30%	n.s.	
Suppressed	16%	12%	n.s.	
Observant	16%	3%	n.s.	
Family influences	16%	27%	n.s.	
Shy	12%	21%	n.s.	
Fearful	10%	15%	n.s.	
Anxious Shyness				
Slow to warm up	33%	30%	n.s.	
Fearful	29%	36%	n.s.	
Shy	23%	21%	n.s.	
Lack of confidence	22%	21%	n.s.	
Family influences	21%	12%	n.s.	
Unfamiliar with environment	19%	18%	n.s.	
Timid	15%	33%	.03	.21
Anxious	10%	15%	n.s.	

TABLE 3
Shyness Typicality and Normality

<i>Mothers' Typicality and Normality Responses</i>	<i>% of mothers (N=106)</i>		<i>Statistical significance^b</i>	<i>Cramer's V</i>
	<i>Hong Kong local mothers^a (n=73)</i>	<i>Mainland immigrant mothers^a (n=33)</i>		
SS is abnormal	11%	30%	<i>p</i> =.01	.24
SS is normal	67%	42%	<i>p</i> =.02	.23
SS is atypical	3%	27%	<i>p</i> =.000	.37
SS is typical	45%	39%	n.s.	
Regulated Shyness (RS)				
RS is abnormal	23%	24%	n.s.	
RS is normal	49%	42%	n.s.	
RS is atypical	51%	46%	n.s.	
RS is typical	16%	24%	n.s.	
Anxious Shyness (AS)				
AS is abnormal	25%	33%	n.s.	
AS is normal	43%	24%	n.s.	
AS is atypical	56%	58%	n.s.	
AS is typical	3%	9%	n.s.	

Appendix A.

Vignettes

Instructions: I am going to tell you a story of two children, who are four years old. I want you to explain to me your feelings and understanding about each child's reaction.

接著落黎，我會講一個故事。呢個故事係有關兩個小朋友，佢哋都係四歲。之後我想請您話俾我知您對於呢兩個小朋友嘅表現有咩感受或者諗法。

A few years ago, Alison and Christina were almost two years old and lived in the same apartment building. Their mothers are friends and often took their daughters to the local park. One day, when they were in the park, a park attendant/security guard said, "Hi!" to the children and the mothers encouraged the girls to respond. Instead the girls clung close to their mothers and refused to make eye contact.

幾年前，當小芳/小明同思思/家強兩歲嗰陣，佢地住喺同一棟大廈裏面。佢地嘅媽媽係好朋友，所以成日都一齊帶兩個小朋友到附近公園玩。有一日，當佢地喺公園度嘅時候，有一個保安叔叔同兩個小朋友講「Hello」。兩位媽媽都鼓勵兩個小朋友答人地。但係兩個小朋友都即刻黏實媽咪，唔肯望保安叔叔。

1. Why do you think the children behaved this way?
您覺得點解兩個小朋友會有咁嘅表現？
2. Is this behavior normal/typical in Hong Kong children?
呢啲表現喺香港小朋友嚟講係咪正常？
3. What adjectives would you use to describe the two children?
您會用咩形容詞嚟形容兩個小朋友呢？

Now, almost two years later, Alison and Christina are four years old and enrolled in the same kindergarten class. It is the holiday season and the school hired Mrs. Chen, a guest teacher, to teach children to play handbells in the winter concert. This teacher brought handbells inside a large bag to the first class. Before taking the bells out, the teacher requested that the children sit quietly in rows on the rug. But many children ran to the front of the classroom and attempted to take peeks inside the large bag. Alison did not rush to the front; instead, she walked towards the rug slowly. The teacher told the children that they should not rush to the front and praised Alison. Alison heard the teacher's compliment and smiled sheepishly. As she continued to walk towards the rug, she avoided attracting attention from others and then chose a seat in the middle of the rug rather than the front. Actually, she too, is curious about what is in the bag, so she listened intently to the conversation of those children who rushed to the front. On that day, Alison enjoyed the class, but she is careful to make sure her bells were not louder than those of other children.

過咗差唔多兩年，小芳/小明同思思/家強而家四歲，仲喺幼稚園讀同一班添。聖誕節就黎到喇，學校專登嚟出面請左一位陳老師黎教全班小朋友搖啲啲，等啲小朋友喺聖誕音樂會度表演。第一堂嘅時候，陳老師帶左一個大袋黎，裏面裝左好多啲啲。喺拎啲啲出黎之

前，陳老師叫小朋友靜靜地喺張地毯度一排排咁坐好。但係好多小朋友都衝左出去班房前面，想裝下個大袋。小芳/小明就無衝出去，而係慢慢行去張地毯度。陳老師同小朋友講話佢哋唔應該衝出黎，又讚小芳/小明。小芳/小明聽到老師讚佢，就微微咁笑。當佢繼續行去張地毯度嗰陣，佢儘量避免引起其他人注意，跟住揀左喺地毯中間而唔係前排度坐低。其實佢都好好奇個袋裏面有啲咩，所以佢好留心聽嗰啲衝左去前面嘅小朋友係度講啲咩。嗰日小芳/小明上堂玩得好開心，但係佢喺搖搖擺擺嘅時候就小心儘量唔好搖得大聲過其他小朋友。

4. Why do you think this first child behaved this way?
您覺得佢點解會有咁嘅表現？
5. What adjectives would you use to describe this first child?
您會用咩形容詞嚟形容呢個小朋友呢？
6. Is this behavior normal/typical in Hong Kong children?
呢啲表現喺香港小朋友嚟講係咪正常？

Now let me tell you what happened to Alison's friend Christina. As Alison walked towards the rug and the other children are taking peeks inside the bag, Christina originally stayed in the back of the room. Christina is interested in the bag as well, but she just observed what the teacher and the other children were doing from a distance. As the children sat down on the rug, she appeared hesitant to walk over. It was only after the teacher waved her to come over that she sat at the edge of the rug, some distance from the other children. During the class, she was preoccupied with observing and listening to others; she played her bells so softly that they were barely audible. It was only after the third lesson that Christina would walk to the rug on her own without being prompted and enjoy herself.

而家等我講下小芬/小明嘅朋友思思/家強跟住點啦。當小芬/小明行去張地毯，而其他小朋友喺度裝緊個袋嘅時候，思思/家強本來喺班房後面。思思/家強對個大袋都好有興趣，但係佢淨係離遠觀察住陳老師同其他小朋友喺度做緊啲咩。當其他小朋友坐好喺張地毯度，思思/家強就好似唔係好想行過去咁。要等到陳老師“yap”佢過去，思思/家強先至行去坐喺張地毯嘅邊邊，同其他小朋友有啲距離。上堂嗰陣，思思/家強掛住睇其他小朋友做咩同埋聽佢哋講緊啲咩，佢搖搖擺擺嘅時候搖得細聲到差啲聽唔到。要等到第三堂嘅時候，思思/家強先至可以唔使老師叫佢都會自己行埋去張地毯度，同埋上堂上得開心。

7. Why do you think this second child behaved this way?
您覺得第二個小朋友點解會有咁嘅表現呢？
8. What adjectives would you use to describe this second child?
您會用咩形容詞嚟形容第二個小朋友呢？
9. Is this behavior normal/typical in Hong Kong children?
呢啲表現喺香港小朋友嚟講係咪正常？

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ABSTRACT

The present study utilized surveys to examine the relations between two culture-specific forms of shyness (e.g. anxious and regulated shyness) and a number of parent (e.g. autonomy support, psychological control) and child (e.g. attentional focusing, inhibitory control) variables in a sample of 116 local Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese immigrant mothers. Results indicated that local mothers rated their children as more regulated shy compared to their immigrant counterparts. Mothers' autonomy support and psychological control were significantly and positively correlated. Higher levels of these two parenting variables were also significantly associated with higher children's inhibitory control scores. Additionally, mothers' autonomy support and the two child variables were positively associated with children's regulated shyness, but not anxious shyness. Moderation analyses revealed no differences in the effects of our mother and child variables on shyness outcomes between these two groups. Our findings suggest that these two types of shyness followed different developmental trajectories and that high levels of autonomy support and psychological control are compatible in Chinese society.

INTRODUCTION

Approximately 15-20% of children are born highly reactive to their environments. From infancy, these children display a general pattern of wariness to unfamiliar stimuli and react strongly and negatively to novel things, places, people and situations, through displays of fear and distress and attempts to avoid or withdraw (Kagan, Reznick, & Snidman, 1988). As these children grow older, many become shy. Shyness is conceptualized as, “temperamental wariness in the face of social novelty and/or self-conscious behaviors in situations of perceived social evaluation” (see Rubin & Coplan, 2010, for full review). Chinese children’s shy behaviors were viewed favorably until recent decades.

China’s meteoric rise to a global economic superpower has changed its cultural landscape. As the country becomes increasingly competitive and market-oriented, the traits that citizens need to be successful have shifted as well. Traditional Chinese culture is influenced by Confucian and Taoist philosophies, which promote self-restraint and discourage self-promotion and individualism (King & Bond, 1985). Until recently, shy behaviors were valued and associated with indices of child adjustment (Chen, Rubin, & Sun, 1992). However, in contemporary China, confidence, sociability, and self-assertion have become highly regarded traits (Hou, Chen, & Chen, 2005). Researchers also suggest that shyness in the Chinese context may encompass three types: shyness towards strangers, anxious shyness, and regulated shyness (Xu, Farver, Yu, & Zhang, 2009). Shyness toward strangers is characterized by fearful and inhibited behavior toward unfamiliar adults and/or peers and reflects individual variation in reactions to unexpected changes in the environment. Anxious shyness occurs in familiar peer contexts and manifests as anxious withdrawal from playgroups and an avoidance of social contact. These individuals are

likely to be sensitive to negative social evaluation and observed reticent behaviors are the result of an internal conflict between approach and avoidance motivations (Xu et al., 2007). Lastly, regulated shyness is characterized by non-assertive and unassuming behavior. Regulated shy individuals are typically modest, polite, and attentive to the needs of others—preferring to concede and/or reconcile when faced with peer conflict or confrontation. Instead of being driven by the approach-avoidance motivational conflict, these individuals are motivated by the desire to fit in (Xu et al., 2007). Children with regulated shy profiles are consistent with parents' valuing of a child who is humble, considerate, obedient, and respectful. Whereas regulated shyness is positively correlated with peer acceptance; anxious shyness is associated with social anxiety and peer rejection (Xu et al., 2007). Other researchers have attempted to export a two factor model of anxious and regulated shyness to South Korea and found that anxious shyness was negatively related to effortful control and social preference, and positively related to self-reported loneliness and interpersonal concerns. In contrast, regulated shyness was positively related to effortful control and social preference and negatively related to loneliness (Xu, Farber & Shin, 2013). Although there is strong evidence for the existence of these types of shyness, little is known about the pathways to these behavioral phenotypes. The current study examines the relations between the child variables (e.g. inhibitory control and attentional focusing) and two parenting variables (e.g. autonomy support and psychological control) in predicting regulated and anxious shyness scores for Mainland immigrant and local Hong Kong children as reported by their mothers. Immigrant status was used as a moderator in the analyses between our child/parent variables and shyness variables because parental socialization has been shown to differ between local and immigrant parents despite sharing the same cultural heritage (Ng, Sze, Tamis-LeMonda, & Ruble, 2016).

Parenting Practices and Shyness.

Researchers believe that parenting plays a major role in the developmental trajectories of shy children. Parenting acts as a potential risk or protective factor. Caregiving for behaviorally inhibited children may present additional challenges leading to the use of maladaptive parenting strategies. Psychological control occurs when parents constrain children's autonomy through psychologically manipulative techniques including the withdrawal of love or induction of guilt (Barber, 2002). Chinese mothers report higher levels of psychological control, which is significantly associated with increased cortisol levels and heightened stress responses (Doan et al., 2017). Shaming, a component of psychological control, refers to the induction of negative affect to orient the child to the relational consequences of misbehavior, and is commonly used by Chinese parents (Louie, Oh, & Lau, 2013). Shaming is believed to be more common in authoritarian families who espouse traditional Chinese beliefs compared to more educated caregivers who support democratic forms of parenting practices with high levels of reasoning and autonomy support (Xu, Zhang, & Hee, 2004). Other studies across developmental time periods have found that mere perceptions of children's shyness changed their parenting strategies. One example noted that parents' perceptions of their toddler's social wariness and shyness predicted parents' preference for limiting children's opportunity for developing an independent self (Rubin et al., 1999). These parents were less likely to agree with statements such as "I let my child make decisions for himself/herself" or "If my child gets into trouble, I expect her or him to handle the problem mostly by herself/himself." Additional studies have found that mothers of shy children may endorse the use of highly controlling behaviors as a response to their child's social difficulties and perceived learned-helplessness (Burgess, Rubin,

Cheah, & Nelson, 2005). The relationship between maternal anxiety and child anxiety has found to be at least partially attributable to mothers' greater use of overprotective parenting (Bayer, Sanson, & Hemphill, 2006). Unfortunately, mothers' attempts to support their children by manipulating their behaviors in a highly power assertive fashion and/or intervening directly (e.g. in a peer dispute) may actually maintain and exacerbate shyness and behavioral inhibition over time (Burgess et al., 2005). At the extreme ends, Kiel and Buss (2014) found that dysregulated fear strongly elicited mothers' protective behavior more so than traditional fearful temperament, and dysregulated fear in toddlerhood predicted social withdrawal in kindergarten through protective parenting. This trend persists over time. In a study with adolescents, Van Zalk and Kerr (2011) found that the more shy adolescents were, the more intrusively controlling, rejecting, and less emotionally warm they perceived their parents to be over time. Furthermore, the more intrusively controlling the youth perceived their parents, the more their shyness increased over time.

In contrast to psychological control, autonomy support practices are those that encourage children's self-direction by adopting children's perspective and allowing them to make their own decisions (Cheung, Pomerantz, Wang, & Qu, 2016). Autonomy support has been demonstrated to have unique contributions to children's developmental outcomes, beyond that of maternal sensitivity (Bernier, Matte-Gagne, Belanger, & Whipple, 2014). While children from low-socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds are more likely to be exposed to controlling parenting, even relative increases in SES within an at-risk sample can be a protective factor through either more autonomy support and/or less control (Harvey et al., 2016). Parents who display low autonomy support often have children who perform poorly on executive functioning tasks (Matte-Gagne,

Bernier, & Lalonde, 2014) while the opposite holds true as well (Bindman, Pomerantz, & Roisman, 2015). In the Chinese context, parents who were warm and receptive to their children and who provided experience for children to explore tended to have children who were more socially adaptable in the transition to formal schooling (Feng, 2005). In line with this trend, Hou, Chen, and Chen (2005) videotaped parent and child interactions of 4-7 year olds and found that the more controlling behaviors the mothers displayed, the more likely the rapidly inhibited behavior developed. In contrast, the more warm and affectionate mothers and fathers were, the more rapidly the uninhibited behavior developed.

Effortful Control and Shyness.

Executive functioning includes processes such as attentional control, inhibitory control, working memory, reasoning, problem solving, and planning, which are all necessary for the cognitive control of behavior (Diamond, 2013). A limited literature suggests that shy children may possess certain advantages in aspects of executive functioning, including effortful control. In a study examining the relationship between executive inhibition and behavioral inhibition, Thorell and her colleagues (2004) found that children who were rated by their parents as high in shyness made fewer errors in a task on inhibition. Conway and Stifter (2012) found that when mothers engaged in verbal or non-verbal behaviors that support, encourage, or maintain their child's focus, they enhanced the development of executive functioning for children with inhibited temperaments. However, shy children reared in high stimulation households have poorer executive functioning than their less-shy peers (Blankson et al., 2011). Relatedly, shy children are more likely to have diminished executive functioning when parents are punitive and rejecting. EEG studies have found that shy children with strong executive functioning skills were

indistinguishable from non-shy children in regard to medial frontal EEG power, an area of the brain that is associated with EF task performance (Wolfe & Bell, 2014). The authors concluded that strong EF skills might be protective and regulatory for shy children. Similarly, one study on Chinese children's shyness and effortful control found that shyness toward strangers was related to regulated shyness among children with high or moderate effortful control and shyness toward strangers was related to anxious shyness among children with low or moderate effortful control (Xu, Farver, Yu & Zhang, 2009). Others have found that children with higher inhibitory control, defined as the ability to inhibit oneself when one is motivated to act or under instruction (Derryberry & Rothbart, 1988), had more rapid decreases in shyness.

Current Study

The primary research questions and hypotheses were as follows:

1. Do Hong Kong local and Mainland immigrant mothers of shy children differ in their reported use of autonomy support and psychological control practices?

We hypothesized that middle-class local mothers would utilize more autonomy control practices and less psychological control than our low-SES immigrant mothers.

2. Do the shy children of Hong Kong local and Mainland immigrant mothers differ in mothers' reported levels of inhibitory control and attentional focusing?

We expected that Hong Kong local mothers would rate their children higher on these two cognitive control processes compared to their immigrant peers.

3. Are mothers' use of autonomy support and psychological control associated with their children's levels of anxious and regulated shyness? Are these associations moderated by immigrant status?

We anticipated that higher use of autonomy support would predict higher regulated shy scores while higher use of psychological control would predict anxious shyness. No hypotheses were made regarding the moderation effect of immigrant status.

4. Are reported child levels of inhibitory control and attentional focusing associated with anxious and regulated shyness scores? Are these associations moderated by immigrant status?

In line with research exploring the role of executive functioning and effortful control in mitigating the negative effects of shyness, we hypothesized that lower levels of attentional focusing and inhibitory control would be found among anxious shy children compared to regulated shy ones. It may be that regulated shy children can recruit more cognitive resources to turn their reactivity to positive social behavior.

METHOD

Participants

The participants in our study were local and Mainland Chinese immigrant mothers of shy kindergarten children residing in the Kowloon and New Territories districts of Hong Kong

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($n=116$). Seventy-eight mothers belonged in the local Hong Kong ($M_{\text{age}} = 37.95$, $SD = 3.58$) group and 38 immigrated from the Mainland ($M_{\text{age}} = 37.84$, $SD = 4.79$). Immigrant mothers arrived to Hong Kong anywhere between 1 to 28 years ($M_{\text{years}} = 8.07$, $SD = 6.60$) and their children were either born in Mainland China or in Hong Kong. The two groups were not significantly different in mothers' age, child gender distribution (50% male in immigrant group; 53% male in local group) or marital status. All except four mothers were married. Independent samples t-tests revealed a significant difference between immigrant ($M_{\text{immigrant child age}} = 4.94$, $SD = .65$) and local children's age ($M_{\text{local child age}} = 5.23$, $SD = .69$); $t(114) = -2.12$, $p = .037$. Local and immigrant families were significantly different in household monthly income $t(114)$, $p = .000$. The mean family monthly income for the immigrant group was slightly above 10,000-30,000HKD and slightly under 50,000-80,000HKD for local mothers. As reference, the median Hong Kong monthly household income is 24,900HKD (Census and Statistics Department, 2016). Mother's education also differed significantly between the two groups ($t(114)$, $p = .000$) with immigrant mothers having a mean education level between middle and high school and local mothers having attained at least undergraduate degree.

Recruitment and Procedure

Recruitment flyers were distributed to local kindergartens and one non-governmental organization (NGO) as part of a larger study on maternal ethnotheories and socialization of children's shyness. Three hundred and fifty nine reply and referral slips were received. Research assistants contacted interested families and administered a 10-minute screener to determine eligibility. Inclusion criteria included: ethnically Chinese mothers of typically developing kindergarten children (i.e. no significant pre-, peri-, or postnatal health problems); mothers of

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children who are “more” shy and/or fearful and inhibited around strangers than typical same-age peers; mothers who identify as primary caregivers; and Mainland immigrant mothers who were born and raised in China but immigrated to Hong Kong as adults (>13 years old) or Chinese mothers who were born and raised as local Hong Kong citizens. From this screening process, one hundred and sixty one families did not qualify (e.g. mother rated their child as average or non-shy or did not meet demographics requirements), 18 qualified but declined to participate, and 66 were unable to be reached.

Trained research assistants who were fluent in the parents’ preferred language (Cantonese or Mandarin) collected the survey data in the participants’ homes, a public place (e.g. library, park, café) or the university laboratory between January - July 2017. The University Institutional Review Boards from the host (The Chinese University of Hong Kong) and home university (The University of Connecticut) approved the study and parents provided their written consent prior to data collection.

Measures

Family demographics questionnaire. Demographic characteristics of participating families (results reported above) were assessed using a questionnaire distributed on the day of data collection.

Chinese Shyness Scale. The Chinese Shyness Scale (CSS) was originally derived from an examination of Chinese teachers’ open-ended descriptions of children’s shy behaviors (Xu, Farver, Chang, Zhang, & Yu, 2007). The scale consists of 10 items that differentiate between

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anxious and regulated types (see appendix A). Items were assessed on a seven-point likert scale anchored by 1 (extremely untrue) and 7 (extremely true). The internal consistency reliabilities of the subscales were acceptable based on guidelines for exploratory studies (Hair et al., 2006). Cronbach's alphas were .64 and .71 for the regulated shy and anxious shy scales, respectively. The scale was used with permission from the author.

Mothers' psychological control. The measure for psychological control was adapted from a questionnaire taken from a study examining the relationship between Chinese mothers' parenting practices and social withdrawal in early childhood (Nelson et al., 2006) and used with the author's permission. Based on previous literature about the role of guilt and shame on psychological control (Becker, 1964), we created a composite variable using seven items from the shaming (e.g. "I tell my child s/he should be ashamed when s/he misbehaves") and guilt induction subscales (e.g. "I make my child feel guilty when s/he does not meet parents' expectations"). Items were assessed on a five-point likert scale anchored by 1 (never) to 5 (always). Cronbach's alpha for the psychological control scale was .77.

Mothers' autonomy support. Mothers' use of autonomy support was assessed using nine items (see Appendix A). This scale was used previously by Ng and colleagues and slightly adapted for our purposes. Mothers rated their frequency of use of autonomy support practices (e.g. "Whenever my child has a problem, I always listen to his/her opinion or perspective"; "I allow my child to make his/her own choices in his/her daily life") from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Cronbach's alpha was .79.

Children's attentional focusing. To assess children's attentional focusing, we used a modified subscale from the Children's Behavioral Questionnaire (CBQ: Short Form). The CBQ short-form is a parent-report measure of temperament for children aged 3-8. It is a culturally validated measure that has shown satisfactory internal consistency and criterion validity, and exhibited longitudinal stability and cross-informant agreement comparable to that of the standard CBQ (Putnam & Rothbart, 2006). This particular subscale measures the child's ability to maintain attention on a task. We included only four (of the original six) items to limit participant fatigue (see appendix A) on a seven-point likert scale anchored by 1 (extremely untrue) and 7 (extremely true). Cronbach's alpha was .76.

Children's inhibitory control. Children's inhibitory control defined as their ability to plan and inhibit adaptive responses in varied situations, was also measured using a modified subscale from the CBQ: Short Form. The four items were assessed on a seven point scale from 1 (extremely untrue) to 7 (extremely true). Cronbach's alpha was .68.

RESULTS

Pearson product-moment correlations were calculated to show the associations among our variables: immigrant status, regulated shyness, anxious shyness, psychological control, autonomy support, attentional focusing, and inhibitory control. The criterion, $p < .05$ was used to determine significant correlations (see Table 2).

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Group Differences in Children's Levels of Shyness

Hong Kong local mothers rated their children as higher in regulated shyness and lower in anxious shyness (see Table 1). The average score for regulated shyness for local children corresponded approximately to a value of slightly true compared to slightly untrue for immigrant mothers. This difference was significant at the $p < .01$ level. Anxious shyness rates did not significantly differ between the two groups; immigrant and local children were rated as slightly untrue in anxious shyness on average.

Group Differences in Mothers' Parenting Practices

One of our goals was to assess whether the two groups differed in the frequencies of parenting practices specifically, psychological control and autonomy support. We ran two separate independent samples t-tests (see Table 1). Results revealed that Mainland immigrant and local Hong Kong mothers were not significantly different in their use of psychological control. The mothers in our sample reported using psychological control practices about half of the time on average over the past six months. Mainland immigrant and local Hong Kong mothers also did not differ in their reported use of autonomy support. Over a six-month period, the average mother in our sample reported using autonomy support practices close to "very often."

Group Differences in Children's Effortful Control

Two additional independent samples t-tests were conducted to determine whether the groups differed on child variables (see Table 1). Mainland immigrant children and local Hong Kong children were not different in their inhibitory control scores. Mothers reported that it is slightly true that their children could inhibit themselves. However, there was an observed difference in

children's attentional focusing. Local Hong Kong children scored higher in attentional focusing (corresponding to "quite true") compared to their immigrant peers (corresponding to "slightly true").

The Effects of Parenting on Children's Shyness

In order to address our final research questions, we performed hierarchical linear regression analyses. In our first model of autonomy support and psychological control predicting mothers' ratings of children's anxious shyness and regulated shyness, we found significant effects for immigrant status (see Table 3). Immigrant mothers, compared to local mothers, rated their children as higher in anxious shyness and lower in regulated shyness. Results also revealed that higher levels of autonomy support use significantly predicted higher levels of regulated shyness, but not anxious shyness. Mothers' levels of psychological control did not predict children's levels of either shyness. We did not find evidence of moderation between immigrant status and autonomy support or psychological control.

Finally, we examined the relationships between children's attentional focusing and inhibitory control and their levels of anxious and regulated shyness in our first model (see Table 3). Neither attentional focusing nor inhibitory control was predictive of anxious shyness. However, immigrant status, attentional focusing and inhibitory control significantly predicted children's levels of regulated shyness. Children from local families had higher levels of regulated shyness. Higher levels of attentional focusing and inhibitory control in children were associated with higher levels of regulated shyness. No moderating effects of immigrant status on attentional focusing or inhibitory control were found.

DISCUSSION

Our analyses revealed that mothers' autonomy support and children's attentional focusing and inhibitory control were associated with children's regulated shyness. Children whose parents reported using higher frequency of autonomy support and had higher attentional focusing and inhibitory control scores were also rated higher in regulated shyness. This association was not true for anxious shyness. Inhibitory control and attentional focusing reflect two components of effortful control (EF) (Putnam & Rothbart, 2006) and it may be that regulated shyness and effortful control cannot be teased apart in the Chinese Shyness Scale (Xu et al., 2007). It also raises the possibility that regulated shy children may have enhanced ability to attend successfully to their environments which may mitigate the risk associated with shyness. Pluess (2005) suggests that individuals differ in sensitivity, the aspects of perception and internal processing of external influences (i.e. input), and responsivity, the resulting behavioral consequences (i.e. the output). Although sensitivity is a predictor of responsivity, it is not perfectly correlated. Behavioral responses are impacted by many factors and circumstances (Pluess, 2005) and here, effortful control may be an important predictor. Congruent with this interpretation, others have found that components of EF (i.e. attention shifting and activational control) may help prevent, or maintain low levels of shyness during childhood (Eggum-Wilkins, Reichenberg, Eisenberg, & Spinrad, 2016). In regards to anxious shyness, we suspect these children may reflect an extreme form of reactivity or shyness and they may find more difficulty recruiting or using inhibitory control practices. There is some research suggesting that those who are at the extreme end of the shy continuum tend to be stable over time (Kagan, Snidman, & Arcus, 1998). Future studies of children's shyness should also explore the role of effortful control, ideally using data from child

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assessments in addition to caregiver reports. Physiological studies may also be fruitful in teasing apart the differences between these two culture-specific types of shyness. Additionally, researchers need to examine what developmental outcomes (e.g. academic, social) are associated with different shy behavioral profiles.

Our findings indicate that local parents rated their children generally as higher in regulated shyness. In contrast, we found a trend approaching significance where immigrant parents rated their children as higher in anxious shyness. We have two possible explanations. The first may be that there is a true difference in immigrant and local children's shyness. Given that attentional focusing and inhibitory control explained 20% and 33% of the variance of regulated shyness scores; it would not be surprising that our local, predominantly middle-class children have greater access to resources that will help them successfully manage their inhibition.

Alternatively, our previous findings suggests that compared to local mothers, this same sample of immigrant mothers were more concerned about their children being shy and viewed temperamental shyness as less common and more problematic in Hong Kong. It is possible that their children are no less regulated shy or more anxious shy than their local peers, but mothers may be hypersensitive to any socially inhibited behaviors their children display leading to potentially over-exaggerated parental reports. Future studies should utilize multi-method, multi-informant (e.g. teacher, child) measures to get a true sense of the reality of shyness in children in Hong Kong.

We found that mothers who used more autonomy support practices within the past six months had children who scored higher in regulated shyness. This is consistent with current parenting

literature, which finds that the use of autonomy support predicts positive developmental outcomes (van der Kaap-Deeder, Vansteenkiste, Soenens, & Mabbe, 2017; Bindman, Pomerantz, & Roisman, 2015) including social competency (NICHD, 2004). Regulated shy children are cooperative, modest, and they concede in peer conflict (Xu, Farver, Yu, & Zhang, 2009), thus it makes sense that this behavioral profile may be related to positive caregiving strategies.

However, due to our sampling design we could only examine associations and not causation between our variables. It is equally probable that children who are regulated shy elicit more positive parenting practices (e.g. autonomy support) from their parents, in concordance with transactional models of parenting (Kiff, Lengua, and Zalewski, 2011). Future research should further assess the directionality of these relationships using more robust designs.

One of the most interesting and surprising findings from this study was that mothers' autonomy support and psychological control were significantly and positively correlated. Higher levels of these two parenting variables were also significantly associated with higher children's inhibitory control scores. This is in contrast to other studies, which found that higher levels of controlling behaviors are associated with poorer child effortful control performances (Hertayas, Hendrawan, Arbiya, & Nurbatari, 2018). Previous research with Chinese populations has found that the authoritarian parenting style, characterized by high levels of demandingness and low responsiveness (Baumrind, 1967) does not fully capture the nuances of Chinese parenting. Chao (1994) proposed an alternative "training" *guan or chiao shun* concept, which emphasize governing and caring through education. Beyond the authoritarianism, this "training" concept encompasses high involvement and maternal closeness. The results of this study add to others that suggest that psychological control holds a different cultural meaning in the Chinese cultural

context. Here, high psychological control is not incompatible with high autonomy support. While harsh and controlling parenting has shown to disrupt children's self-regulatory abilities (e.g. through stimulation of high levels of negative arousal) (Chang, Olson, Sameroff, & Sexton 2011), we propose that psychological control (coupled with maternal warmth in this specific context) may be adaptive for at least one component of effortful control (i.e. inhibitory control). Chao and Tseng (2002) proposed that the effects of psychological control on Chinese children depend on the way control is defined. Whereas the domineering type predicts negative outcomes in European American and Asian children, the indigenous type, which originates from parental warmth and concern predict positive adjustment indices. Future studies can explore these relations, hopefully, with a sample that includes average and non-shy children.

Finally, we did not find evidence that group membership (immigrant versus local) moderated the association between our parenting and child variables and children's regulated shyness. These results may indicate that the development of children's regulated shyness follows the same trajectory regardless of group membership. However, our sample size of immigrant mothers ($n=38$) may have been too small to detect any moderation effects. Future studies should include larger samples – and explore whether regulated shyness exists in other non-Chinese contexts, and if so, how these same variables predict this behavioral profile. Although this current study is not without limitations, it offers insight into modern Chinese parenting practices and their relations to the development of children's regulated shyness.

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Table 1
Sample Descriptives by Immigrant Status

Variable	Full Sample			Mainland Immigrant			Hong Kong Local			<i>t</i>	<i>sig</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>		
Regulated shyness**	3.94	.77	116	3.66	.88	38	4.08	.67	78	-2.63	<i>p</i> =.01
Anxious shyness [†]	3.83	.89	116	4.06	1.01	38	3.71	.81	78	1.86	<i>p</i> =.07
Psychological control	2.97	.79	116	3.15	.74	38	2.88	.80	78	1.79	ns
Autonomy support	3.77	.62	116	3.79	.68	38	3.77	.60	78	.15	ns
Attentional Focusing**	4.40	.93	116	4.05	.93	38	4.58	.88	78	-2.97	<i>p</i> =.004
Inhibitory Control	4.23	.94	116	4.05	.90	38	4.32	.95	78	-1.45	ns

Note. ***p*<.01. [†]*p* < .10 Child variables (regulated, anxious shyness, attentional focusing, and inhibitory control) were assessed on a 7 point scale anchored by 1 (extremely untrue) and 7 (extremely true). Mother variables of psychological control and autonomy support was assessed using a 5 point likert scale with 1 (never) through 5(always).

Table 2
Correlations of Variables of Interest

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Immigrant Status	-						
2. Regulated Shyness	.26**	-					
3. Anxious Shyness	-.19*	.01	-				
4. Psychological Control	-.17	-.04	-.09	-			
5. Autonomy Support	-.01	.21*	-.12	.24**	-		
6. Attentional Focusing	.27**	.42**	-.05	.07	.07	-	
7. Inhibitory Control	.14	.52**	-.08	.22*	.47**	.00	-

Note: **p*<.05. ***p*<.01

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Table 3

Multiple Regression Analysis for Children's Anxious Shyness and Regulated Shyness

		Parenting Scales				Child Scales			
		Autonomy Support		Psychological Control		Attentional Focusing		Inhibitory Control	
		ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β
Anxious Shyness									
Step 1	Immigrant Status (IS)	.05 [†]	-.35*	.05 [†]	-.39*	.03	-	.04	-
	Parent/Child Variable		-.17		-.14		-		
Step 2	Parent/Child X IS	.001	-	.01	-	.02	-	.001	-
	Total R ²	.05		.06		.05		.04	
Regulated Shyness									
Step 1	Immigrant Status (IS)	.12***	.43**	.07*	.43**	.20***	.26 [†]	.31***	.32*
	Parent/Child Variable		.27*		.004		.31***		.41***
Step 2	Parent/Child X IS	.001	-	.01	-	.001	-	.02	-
	Total R ²	.12		.08		.20		.33	

Note: β s for all predictors in highest significant step are shown. Immigrant status entered as a “dummy” variable: 0 = immigrant, 1 = local.

[†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

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Measures

Directions to mother:

Please read each item on the questionnaire and think about how often you exhibit this behavior and place your answer on the **first** line to the left of the item.

1=Never

2=Once in a while

3=About half of the time

4=Very often

5=Always

Mothers' Autonomy Support Scale (alpha = .79)

I allow my child to make choices whenever possible.

When my child has a problem, I always listen to his/her opinion or perspective.

I do *not* insist that my child does things my way.

I allow my child to choose what s/he wants to play with when I play with him/her.

I allow my child to decide things for him/herself (e.g., which homework to work on first).

I allow my child to make his/her own choices in his/her daily life (e.g., what to wear, what to have for snacks).

I explain to my child why I want him/her to do something.

I ask my child to decide where s/he wants to go on weekends.

I ask my child for his/her opinion when it comes to decisions about him/her (e.g., participate in an extracurricular activity).

Mothers' Psychological Control Scale (alpha = .77)

I make my child aware of the sacrifices my spouse and I made for him/her.

I say, "If you really care for your parents, you would not do things that cause us to worry".

I tell my child of all the things that my spouse and I have done for him/her.

I make my child feel guilty when s/he does not meet our expectations.

I tell my child that he/she should be ashamed when he/she misbehaves.

I inform my child that punishment will always find him/her when misbehavior occurs.

I let my child know how disappointed my spouse and I are when he/she misbehaves.

Circle #If the statement is:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | 非常不恰當 extremely untrue of your child |
| 2 | 很不恰當 quite untrue of your child |
| 3 | 有點不恰當 slightly untrue of your child |
| 4 | 不適用 neither true nor false of your child |
| 5 | 有點恰當 slightly true of your child |
| 6 | 很恰當 quite true of your child |
| 7 | 非常恰當 extremely true of your child |

Chinese Shyness Scale (RS alpha = .64; AS alpha = .71)

Regulated Shyness

Behaves modestly.
Avoids conflict with peers.
Does not show off.
Compromises or negotiates in confrontations with peers.
Has a polite demeanor.

Anxious Shyness

Is afraid to join or approach peer play groups.
Isolates him/herself from others.
Is timid and fearful.
Does not initiate peer contact.
Is anxious and nervous when speaking in front of peers.

Child Behavioral Questionnaire Inhibitory Control Scale (alpha =.68)

My child can wait before entering into new activities if s/he is asked to.
My child has trouble sitting still when s/he is told to (in school, at restaurant, or during family outing).
(Reverse scored)
My child is good at following instructions.
My child can easily stop an activity when s/he is told "no."

Child Behavioral Questionnaire Attentional Focusing Scale (alpha =.76)

When practicing an activity, my child has a hard time keeping her/his mind on it. (Reverse scored)
My child will move from one task to another without completing any of them. (Reverse scored)
When building or putting something together, my child becomes very involved in what s/he is doing, and works for long periods.
My child is easily distracted when listening to a story. (Reverse scored)
My child sometimes becomes absorbed in a picture book and looks at it for a long time.

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ABSTRACT

Parental ethnotheories are the “implicit, taken-for-granted ideas about the ‘natural’ or ‘right’ way to think or act” (Harkness et al., 2010 p. 67) and include ideas about children, the self as a parent, and family life. These cultural belief systems guide caregivers’ actions and may endure through cultural changes and even immigration (Rosenthal & Roer-Strier, 2001). Ethnotheories encompass parents’ goals, or the outcomes that parents hope to attain with their children (Harkness et al., 2007) and are influenced by children’s temperaments. One aspect of temperament, shyness, has become a focus of international researchers due to its changing implications for child development in Chinese society.

Traditional Chinese culture is rooted in Confucianism, which promotes self-restraint and discourages self-promotion and individualism (King & Bond, 1985). Until recently, shyness was valued and associated with positive youth adjustment (Chen, Rubin, & Sun, 1992). However, westernization in China has led to confidence, sociability, and self-assertion becoming highly regarded (Hou, Chen, & Chen, 2005). Nevertheless, much remains unknown about Chinese mothers’ socialization goals for their shy children in Hong Kong – a place where Eastern and Western cultures meet – and how ethnotheories differ between Mainland immigrant and local-born Chinese caregivers. Despite sharing the same language and heritage with native locals, immigrant parents face discrimination, employment challenges, and having to direct their children’s development in an unfamiliar environment. We expected the local-born mothers might be exposed to more Western influence from the mainstream culture and place more emphasis on children’s individuality than do immigrant mothers.

This mixed-methods study utilized semi-structured interviews to explore the long-term goals and socialization strategies of sixty-eight local ($M_{\text{age}} = 38.44$, $SD = 3.65$) and thirty-three

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Mainland immigrant mothers ($M_{\text{age}} = 37.10$, $SD = 4.23$, $M_{\text{years in HK}} = 8.29$) of shy kindergarten children in Hong Kong. The developmental niche framework (Super & Harkness, 1986) guided the study. Thematic analyses of interviews and chi-square tests indicated that happiness, morality, educational and professional success were valued goals by both groups (see Table 1). A large proportion of immigrant mothers espoused obedience and filial piety as important goals ($X^2(1, N = 101) = 9.00, p = .005$), whereas local mothers emphasized autonomy and personal choice ($X^2(1, N = 101) = 3.91, p < .05$). Across both groups, mothers valued autonomy supportive practices, parental warmth, and quality time together as effective socialization strategies. Immigrant mothers discussed the benefits of social modeling and self-improvement practices ($X^2(1, N = 101) = 7.69, p < .01$); however, they also expressed concern about not knowing how to support their children's future success ($X^2(1, N = 101) = 7.44, p < .01$). Discriminant function analyses revealed that immigrant mothers' patterns of responses for goals and strategies were more distinctive than local ones (see Table 2).

In summary, we uncovered meaningful similarities and differences between the two cultural groups. Contrary to common perceptions of Chinese parenting being characterized by authoritarian "tiger parenting," local-born and immigrant mothers valued authoritative practices. Immigrant mothers' goal for self-improvement signifies their commitment to their children but their reported low self-efficacy indicates potential avenues for intervention. Finally, greater effectiveness in our sets of themes predicting group membership for immigrant mothers suggests the development of shared ethnotheories in response to adaptation to parenting in Hong Kong.

INTRODUCTION

Since the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997, 1.5 million new citizens have arrived accounting for 20% of the city's population ("1.5 million mainland migrants change Hong Kong", 2017). These new arrivals include women of childbearing age and families with young children. Although many immigrants share the same Chinese heritage and language with Hong Kong locals for many, it is their first time experiencing the pressures of a fast-paced, competitive environment. The average monthly income of immigrant households is only 40% of that for all households in Hong Kong (Home Affairs Department and Immigrant Department, 2015). These individuals often experience prejudice, social exclusion, discrimination, employment challenges and report lower levels of social support. In addition to these challenges, immigrant parents have the task of directing their children's development in an unfamiliar environment and deciding how to bridge the two cultures.

Regardless of ecological context, all parents share basic universal tasks including establishing families, raising children, and socializing them with the habits and dispositions that will enhance their survival and well-being (Edwards & Bloch, 2010; Whiting, 1963; LeVine, 1988). Although this process of transmission of beliefs and practices from parents to offspring is universal; the content of these messages differs in response to demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural demands (Harwood, Miller, & Irizarry, 1995; LeVine, 1988). Parental goals are the outcomes that parents hope to attain with their children and are often implicit and culturally recognizable (Harkness et al., 2007). Shared cultural beliefs are known as parental ethnotheories and they function as "the nexus through which elements of the larger culture are filtered, and act as an important source of parenting practices and the organization of daily life for children and

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families” (Harkness et al., 2006, p. 62). Although behaviors cannot be explained by beliefs alone, beliefs are a significant predictor. Thus, valuable insight into developmental processes can be gained from the systematic study of “cultural communities and parental ethnotheories, between ethnotheories and everyday practices, and between practices and developmental outcomes” (Harkness et al., 2007, p.8).

The present study explores local Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese immigrant mothers’ developmental goals and socialization strategies for their shy kindergarten children. Although the world is becoming increasingly connected through technology and global migration, much remains unknown about how parental goals and socialization strategies shift in response to immigration, acculturation, and adaptation to a new host culture. Moreover, previous scholarship often fails to address how parental goals and practices are influenced by children’s unique temperaments. Older models of parenting shifted the bulk of socialization responsibilities to parents, but today there is consensus for the bi-directional and interactive effects between parenting practices and child characteristics (Kiff, Lengua, and Zalewski, 2011). China is currently undergoing rapid industrialization and now boasts the world’s second largest economy. Unprecedented growth in the rise of the middle class will result in seventy-six percent of urban households holding this title by 2022 compared to only 4% in 2000 (McKinsey & Company, 2016). These macro-level changes have resulted in a shift in parents’ preference away from children’s shyness. Shyness is characterized by the behavioral style of refraining from novel social situations (Schmidt and Coplan, 2014) and these children may display of reticent behaviors including a form of non-social play that involves the prolonged watching of other children without accompanying play (Coplan, 2000) and parallel play behaviors where the shy

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child plays next to but does not engage with other children (Asendorpf, 1993). In western societies, shyness is associated with negative developmental outcomes including social phobia, greater rates of anxiety, low self-esteem, depressive symptoms, internalizing problems, peer difficulties and school difficulties (Chavira, Stein, & Malcarne, 2002; Rubin, Coplan, & Bowker, 2009). In contrast, this trait was traditionally viewed as a virtuous quality associated with modesty, sensitivity, self-control, maturity and adjustment and shy children were rated favorably in China (Harkness & Super, 1999). Higher prevalence rates were found in Chinese children compared to their Australian and American peers (Rubin et al., 2006) in part because shy behaviors are congruent with Chinese teaching that emphasizes behavioral conformity and the training of children to control emotional expression of thoughts and feelings (Ho, 1996; Wu, 1996). Asian parents reinforce, or respond positively to expressions of cautious, reticent behavior whereas Western parents respond with overprotectiveness or harshness to socially wary behavior (Chen et al., 1998). Chen and his colleagues (1998) examined behavioral inhibition and child-rearing attitudes in Canada and China and found that inhibition was positively correlated with Canadian mothers' punishment orientation and negatively related to mothers' acceptance and encouragement of achievement. However, the opposite was found with a Chinese sample. Chinese mothers were more likely to be warm and accepting towards inhibited toddlers and less likely to respond to them with rejection and a punishment orientation. That study was conducted decades ago, and since then, China has experienced immense cultural, political, and economic change. As China's market oriented society expanded and western values of self-assertion and sociability increased in popularity, shyness became associated with poor social adjustment and academic outcomes (Chen et al., 2005). In one of the rare studies that explored the attributions that Asian parents made about shy-withdrawal behaviors, Cheah and Rubin (2004) found that

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Mainland Chinese mothers regarded socially withdrawn behavior negatively and endorsed training strategies (Chao, 1994) such as training the child to act a particular way and providing specific instructions with reasoning to modify children's behavior. This narrative is consistent with a recent study we conducted (Liu, Harkness, Super, 2018) in which we found that Mainland Chinese mothers viewed shyness unfavorably, attributed such behaviors to environmental causes (e.g. ineffective parenting), and espoused socialization strategies such as guidance and habituation training (e.g. exposing children to novel environments and people until they are no longer fearful.) It is noteworthy to mention however, that in rural regions of Mainland China, shyness continues to be associated with indices of adjustment such as leadership, teacher-rated competence, and academic achievement (Chen, Wang & Wang, 2009). Consequently, those arriving to Hong Kong from rural regions may have to manage dissonant messages about what it means to successfully raise a shy child. We used the developmental niche framework (Super & Harkness, 1986) to guide this study. The niche consists of three main components: the physical and social settings, customs and practices of childrearing and parental ethnotheories (or parents' psychology). Parental ethnotheories are of particular interest. As "implicit, taken-for-granted ideas about the 'natural' or 'right' way to think or act" (Harkness & Super, 2006, p. 62), ethnotheories include not only ideas about children, but also ideas about one's role as a parent and family life. This study addressed two primary questions: Are there group differences between Chinese immigrant and local Hong Kong mothers' ethnotheories about developmental goals and caregiving strategies? How distinct are these two groups' responses? Given the exploratory nature of the study, no hypotheses were made.

METHOD

Participants

The full sample ($n=101$) was recruited from the Kowloon and New Territories districts of Hong Kong. Primarily a shopping, arts, and entertainment district, Kowloon is an urban, populous area (population: approximately 2 million) that encompasses the northern part of Hong Kong. The New Territories is a vast region of parks, wetlands, mountains, and beaches located north of Kowloon. This mostly rural region makes up 83% of Hong Kong's territory and is home to 3.7 million people.

The divided sample consisted of 68 local Hong Kong ($M_{\text{age}} = 38.44$, $SD = 3.65$) and 33 Mainland Chinese immigrant mothers ($M_{\text{age}} = 37.10$, $SD = 4.23$) of kindergarten children. Immigrant mothers arrived to Hong Kong anywhere between 1 to 28 years ($M_{\text{years}} = 8.29$, $SD = 6.93$). Their children were either born in Mainland China or in Hong Kong. The two groups were not significantly different in mothers' age, child gender distribution (55% male in immigrant group; 52% male in local group) or marital status (all except four mothers were married). Independent samples t-tests revealed a significant difference between immigrant ($M_{\text{immigrant child age}} = 4.92$, $SD = .69$) and local children's age ($M_{\text{local child age}} = 5.27$, $SD = .65$); $t(99) = -2.49$, $p = .015$. Local and immigrant families were significantly different in household monthly income $t(99)$, $p = .000$. The mean family monthly income for the immigrant group was slightly above 10,000-30,000HKD, and it was slightly under 50,000-80,000HKD for local mothers. The median Hong Kong monthly household income is 24,900HKD (Census and Statistics Department, 2016). Mother's education also differed significantly between the two groups ($t(99)$, $p = .000$) with immigrant mothers

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having a mean education level between middle and high school and local mothers on average having attained an undergraduate degree.

Recruitment and Procedure

Recruitment flyers were distributed to local kindergartens and one non-governmental organization (NGO) as part of a larger study on maternal ethnotheories and socialization of children's shyness. Three hundred and fifty nine reply and referral slips were received. Research assistants contacted interested families and administered a 10-minute screener to determine eligibility. Inclusion criteria included: ethnically Chinese mothers of typically developing kindergarten children (i.e. no significant pre-, peri-, or postnatal health problems); mothers of children who are "more" shy and/or fearful and inhibited around strangers than typical same-age peers; mothers who identify as primary caregivers; and Mainland immigrant mothers who were born and raised in China but immigrated to Hong Kong as adults (>13 years old) or Chinese mothers who were born and raised as local Hong Kong citizens. From this screening process, one hundred and sixty one families did not qualify (e.g. mother rated their child as average or non-shy or did not meet demographics requirements), 18 qualified but declined to participate, and 66 were unable to be reached. Of the original sample, thirteen mothers were excluded from this current analysis due to a sibling participating in which case one child was randomly selected (n=2), a mother disclosing at data collection that her child had a severe speech and language disorder (n=1), and missing data (n=10).

Trained research assistants who were fluent in the parents' preferred language (Cantonese or Mandarin) collected the data in the participants' homes, a public place (e.g. library, park, café) or

the university laboratory between January - July 2017. The University Institutional Review Boards from the host (The Chinese University of Hong Kong) and home university (The University of Connecticut) approved the study and parents provided their written consent prior to data collection.

Measures

Family demographics questionnaire. Demographic characteristics of participating families (results reported above) were assessed using a questionnaire distributed on the day of data collection.

Semi-structured interview. A semi-structured interview was conducted with mothers. This interview was developed to assess parental ethnotheories and caregiving practices for shy Chinese children. For the present study, we report only on the results of two open-ended questions (“What are your greatest hopes for your children?” “As a parent, what are the most important things you can do now for your child to be successful in the future?”). These two questions were designed to elicit mothers’ developmental goals for their children and their perceived role in shaping their children’s future success. The first author and a fluent local speaker conducted the interview. Responses were recorded verbatim, transcribed, and translated from Chinese to English by trained bilingual research assistants.

Qualitative and Statistical Analyses

The results from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed both qualitatively using the online qualitative research program, Dedoose© (Version 7.6.21) and quantitatively using SPSS version 25 (IBM, Armonk, NY). Mixed method design combines quantitative and qualitative approaches

and has the advantage of overcoming the limitations of a single design. The qualitative data were analyzed using principles of thematic analysis (McClelland, 1975) and "open coding" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The codes were derived from the literature and inductively, through close readings of the interviews and meetings with the research team. Interviews were coded into two major categories "Mothers' Goals" and "Mothers' Socialization Practices", based on the developmental niche framework and the parental ethnotheories model (Super & Harkness, 1986; Harkness & Super, 2006).

The qualitative data were analyzed using two different quantitative analysis techniques. To answer the first question ("Are there group differences between Chinese immigrant and local Hong Kong mothers' specific developmental goals and caregiving strategies?") chi-square tests for independence were performed. These tests were used to determine whether there was a significant relationship between immigrant status (0=immigrant; 1=local) and each developmental goal and socialization strategy (0=not mentioned; 1=mentioned) with frequencies higher than 20% for either group. For significant chi-square results, effect sizes (Cramer's V) were reported to indicate the magnitude of difference. To address the second question (How distinct are these two groups' responses?) two separate discriminant function analyses were performed for goals and socialization strategies. Only codes that met a 20% threshold (i.e. mention by 20% or more of mothers from either group) were included in the models. Discriminant function analysis shares many similarities with analysis of variance (ANOVA); it seeks to determine whether groups differ in regard to a mean of a variable, and then uses that variable to predict group membership (e.g. new cases).

Results

Similarities in Local and Immigrant Mothers' Goals

Twelve core developmental goals emerged from the thematic analyses, based on a cut-off of 20% or more mentioned by either group. Subsequent chi-square tests indicated that there were no significant group differences in the majority of the goal descriptors (see Table 1 for descriptors and proportions). Immigrant and local mothers did not differ in their desire for their children to be happy, healthy, and moral. In many cases, happiness was viewed as inextricably tied to having the autonomy to pursue one's own interests. In reference to happiness, an immigrant mother explained:

I hope that she is able to be more positive, happy, and have her own thinking and also be able to do what she enjoys doing... being like sunshine and not be so sad.

Relatedly, a local mother relayed:

I want them to be happy and also able to do what they enjoy doing. In fact, that's also happiness.

Both immigrant and local mothers strived to produce children of sound moral character who do not gain at the expense of others. Mothers acknowledge that Hong Kong children experience tremendous academic pressure and although all parents wished their child to be successful academically and professionally, that was not a necessary requirement. Being a kind, upright citizen however, was non-negotiable as one local mother explained:

In fact, there's nothing special [that I hope for]. I am more concerned about his moral character. Even when I was pregnant with him I told myself that even though every parent wants her child to do well academically, get a good education... I think that even if you are forty or fifty you can continue your education but your values come from when you are young. His moral values are very important.

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Many mothers talked about tempering their expectations and hoping their child grows up “average”. The relaxing of rules applied to academic expectations but not to values of benevolence and kindness as one immigrant mother noted:

I hope that he becomes a good person. I’m not saying such and such level of education or perhaps make a certain amount of money, the most important is that he is an okay person; that he becomes a good person. He is kind [and has] good values. These things are particularly important. The problem is there are many people who read books to death [Chinese idiom]. They get a lot of education and make a lot of money but at home mom and dad don’t care. What good is that, right? You need to be kind.

Though the majority of local mothers (60%) and many immigrant mothers (46%) held happiness as a goal, it should not come at the expense of taking advantage or hurting others:

One more thing... for her to not learn bad and wrong, to be happy but not letting happiness to negatively impact other people. In fact, as parents we all want our children to be like this.

The developmental goals that pertained to children’s education were commonly viewed through a long-term lens. Mothers from both groups hoped their children would perform well in school so that in the future they could have an easier life and a career they enjoyed as shown by this local mother:

This is just my hope... that he does well in school, gets good scores in exams so he can attend a good school and then when he is older, I hope that he is able to do what he wants to do. Just meaning his path is smooth. I hope the path he walks is smooth and [he does not] encounter so many frustrations, roadblocks, that sort of thing.

Additionally, mothers in our study recognized that academic and career success were not their choice to make. Mothers could only be supportive and provide their sons and daughters with opportunities to explore their interests. This idea of being presented with “options” to choose from was seen as a preferable outcome:

I hope that he... I hope that he gets more education but this is not something I can determine for him, yes, because I want him regardless of what career path he chooses – at the very least, that he has more options to choose from [in terms of jobs]. So it's not that the job chooses him but he chooses the job. That's better. –Immigrant mother

Finally, we found that a comparable percentage of local and immigrant mothers wanted their children to possess personal virtues of learning and related behavior (22% of locals and 18% of immigrants). These virtues and behaviors included persistence, self-improvement orientation, learning enthusiasm, and concentration.

Differences in Local and Immigrant Mothers' Goals

Significant local and immigrant group differences were found in the themes of Autonomy and personal choice and Obedience and filial piety (see table 1). The first encompassed mothers' desire for their child to become independent not only in daily tasks (e.g. eating, bathing, bedtime routines) but also in thinking, decision-making, and actions (e.g. holding one's own beliefs, pursuing one's own interests). Local mothers were almost twice as likely to mention autonomy and personal choice as an important socialization goal compared to their immigrant counterparts. The effect size of this difference was small ($X^2(1, N = 101) = 3.91, p < .05$, Cramer's $V = .20$). For example, this local mother stated that she wished for her child to become self-sufficient and happy:

I actually hope that she is happy... that's the most important actually. That she is happy and also that she learns something that she can use, to be able to... to be able to take care of herself. To be able to make use of what she learns when enters society. The most important is that she takes care of herself.

Most mothers thought of autonomy as a long-term goal. The acquisition of autonomy, independence, and individual choice would allow their children to find social meaning in their lives through a meaningful career, contributions to society, or as pathway to higher self-concept. Other mothers held more practical, short-term goals for autonomy such as this local mother:

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I hope his self-care ability will continue to improve. Now in terms of his self-care, he requires mom and older sister to help him. He is a boy and also the youngest boy, so I will accept it. But once he enters primary school he needs to feed himself at dinner, he needs to eat faster on his own. And so I hope he is able to take care of himself, be a happy student.

The second meaningful group difference is mothers' desire for their children to be obedient and/or express filial piety, the Confucian duty of respect, obedience, and care for one's parents and elders. Immigrant mothers were six times more likely to discuss this goal compared to local Hong Kong mothers. This difference was highly significant ($X^2(1, N = 101) = 9.00, p = .005$, Cramer's $V = .30$). Obedience to parents and other authority figures, like teachers, were viewed as important as this immigrant mother stated:

I hope that her concentration – that part could change for the better. At the minimum when her teacher speaks, she can intently listen. When the teacher asks her to do something, she needs to be able to do it and I can see [the results]... also that she is obedient to us and that she listens to what we say. Like knowing that for mom and dad it's not easy to make money, so don't waste money.

Similarly, another immigrant mother mentioned her hope for filial piety along with other socialization goals (e.g. autonomy):

Success means that he will be able to take care of himself, that he holds himself to a personal sense of responsibility, and also, he knows how to be responsible to his parents and himself. I hope that he has a loving heart and that he has filial piety. He does not have to be too exceptional.

Although the goal of Emotional Regulation was not statistically significant between the two groups ($p = .09$), it was mentioned by 16% of local mothers compared to only 3% of immigrant ones. Many local Hong Kong mothers discussed wanting their children to have higher emotional intelligence, which involves being able to discriminate between emotions, regulate negative

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emotions, and adapt emotions accordingly depending on social contexts. These two mothers noted:

In terms of discriminating between her emotions – that is she becomes a calm person, controlled, a tender person. Meaning that she is not always thinking about only herself in circumstances, that whenever she cannot meet her personal goals, she throws a tantrum or hits people. –Local mother

Greatest hopes... most importantly is that he is able to control [himself]... his EQ is better to put it most simply. That he is able to control his emotions better, yes. But this requires some time. The most important is this because in fact, if your EQ is good then it could positively impact many things that you do. –Local mother

In contrast, although the statistical difference was not meaningful for the codes of Social Competence and Child is Less Shy – a larger proportion of immigrant mothers desired these goals for their children (21% immigrant versus 13% local for social competence; 27% immigrant versus 15% local for child is less shy). One immigrant mother commented:

I hope that she is able to go to different places and have the ability to be natural when interacting with others. Meaning not being so afraid, always cowering behind, sitting behind and being afraid to interact with others.

Similarities in Local and Immigrant Mothers' Socialization Strategies

Results from our thematic analyses on mothers' socialization strategies uncovered twelve themes shared by 20% or more mothers from either group. Follow-up chi-square tests (see Table 2) revealed substantial agreement between immigrant and local mothers in social and emotional parenting strategies. Sixty percent of local Hong Kong mothers and a comparable 46% of Mainland immigrant mothers reflected on autonomy support practices that included providing guidance, open communication, allowing children to make their own decisions, respecting children's independence, and being non-controlling. For example, an immigrant mother described how she grants her child agency to learn important lessons on her own:

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I would not say that I would force her to do anything – to do what I expect but I would explain to her why do you have to do this, what are the options for her to understand. For example, often I will tell her, “You can ask dad, mom, or grandma [paternal] if this is correct” and then sometimes she will go ask dad, “Mom did this. Is that right?” Dad will say, “Okay – this strategy is okay.” Then she will know for the future.

Instead of merely demanding certain behavior from their children, mothers highlighted their use of reasoning. This local mother discussed how she recruits other resources (e.g. books, newspapers) to get her message across to her child. In addition, she explained how reasoning with her child works best when the child observes that her parents are consistent in their messaging and actions:

I need to talk reasons with her – using everyday opportunities to give examples and reasons. Or perhaps through reading books to explain reasons about learning. Reading newspapers to give learning reasons. Also, your father and mother’s point of view, how you judge right from wrong also impacts her views. I hope [I am successful] in this aspect for her... when she encounters bad [something immoral], that my messages will be consistent...telling her, “This is not right.” I think that using these strategies is important.

Parental warmth too, is an important strategy for immigrant and local parents alike. A local mother reflected:

I feel that I have to give love to her, give love meaning the love of a family so she feels that our home is warm. Also, spending time [and] making an effort for quality time with her. Talking to her, understanding what she needs, also communicating with her what I need to do to help her.

Similarly, a second mother suggested that children only internalize parents’ lessons in the context of a warm, loving, secure relationship:

I need to make my best effort to spend more time with him. Be with him and love him. Give him the feeling that he is loved so he knows that regardless of [the circumstance], mommy and daddy are right beside him. You can only remind him more often what is right and what is wrong but he must be able to feel that you love him first. Only then will he listen to your words and find them useful.

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Cultivating children's self-esteem is also a practice that mothers find value in, though it may not come immediately or naturally as this local mother recalled:

I hope that for myself I have the ability to be able to teach her. Yes, because there are some times where I generally have to remind myself that I have to encourage her more, build her self-esteem... I need to do it deliberately myself. As a parent, I need to deliberately do it. If I notice that she is doing something well, I need to immediately praise her. Sometimes she will come home very happy and tell me that the teacher praised her, but at that moment I do not have a reaction. That's right, I don't react and it becomes a lost opportunity. This is considered a minor issue but it is a very good opportunity.

Although adversity is inevitable, mothers discussed facing challenges together with their children. Hong Kong has experienced a spate of student suicides in part due to tremendous academic pressure. Parental guidance and teaching can help offset the risk of maladaptive outcomes, as this mother put:

In the context of his development, when he experiences difficulties I [should] face it with him – that's the most important. When he faces difficulties, I should use positive methods with him – positive methods to solve the problem. I should encourage him to try methods to solve the problem. When he encounters adversity, encounters challenges – during that time I should teach him how to solve it. Because now there are many children now who when they encounter adversity or difficulties, they give up or very easily be the type to commit suicide. The most harmful is this. The most important is that when he continues to develop that he is able to handle the difficult times, meaning facing his problems, dealing with his own emotions – handling the particular issue then I imagine that as he becomes older, he is able to prepare for other [issues] because there is a lot of uncertainty in the future. So if all along he knows that he has the.... ability to do it then next time when he encounters a similar circumstance, similar surroundings – he will be able to face it I think. This is an important focus I think.

Lastly, there were no group differences in the ways that mothers saw themselves as providers of resources to their children whether material (e.g. healthy meals, clothing, home), opportunities (e.g. experiences, extracurriculars) or academic or cognitive (e.g. entrance ticket to a top-tier school, books, tutoring etc.)

Differences in Local and Immigrant Mothers' Socialization Strategies

Chi-square tests uncovered two statistically meaningful differences in mothers' socialization strategies. Compared to local mothers, immigrant mothers are more likely to underscore the importance of social modeling and mother self-improvement ($X^2(1, N = 101) = 7.69, p < .01$, Cramer's $V = .28$). Social modeling denoted being a positive model for their child and self-improvement practices included recruiting other sources of help (e.g. experts, knowledgeable friends), earning more money to provide additional learning opportunities, mother self-care, or learning the school curriculum to be able to assist with homework. One immigrant mother explained the steps she needed to take:

I should ask for others' opinions more, get people's advice more often and then if there is something I feel is right after doing the research, getting the information, if there's anything that would be helpful for him – I should go [for it]. Allow him to participate [in recommended activities].

The attitude to seek outside support and advice is also present with this second immigrant mother:

I know she won't listen to me anymore when she becomes a teenager. And I'll try my best to spend time with her. I've also attended some parenting classes like what I've talked about earlier and I realized things like where love comes from and how to enhance her confidence. I've also attended lessons like that and had individual conversations with social workers. It's not about my child being extraordinarily naughty or having major issues that I go to seek advice.

In terms of social modeling, this immigrant mother explained the power that parents wield in determining children's future outcomes:

The most important thing I can do is model myself. Accomplish what I need for myself. I have to be happy myself because that will influence my child. In fact, children's personalities and regardless of what type of person they become... the most important and biggest part is parenting, how they teach them... how parents are as people. So that's

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why I think for children – the minimum expectation is for parents to do well themselves. If parents are good people, children will naturally not do too poorly themselves. Yes, modeling myself is more important than directly teaching.

Lastly, we found a significant group difference in mothers' mention of not knowing how to support their children's future success ($X^2(1, N = 101) = 7.44, p < .01$, Cramer's $V = .27$).

Although the number of mothers who mentioned this was small ($n=5$), several immigrant mothers mentioned being distressed over their children's shyness and not knowing how to modify it (e.g. "I really want to know what strategies I can use that will make her change into a not so introverted person, to not be so shy. I want to know these strategies. Now I don't know what I should be doing."). One mother clearly had good advice to provide to her child but lacked confidence in implementing it:

I want my son to know that he is capable of doing many things if he takes his time. He even says so himself: "If I can't get it the first time, I can get it in future tries." I told him that's right. To make progress means improving day after day. Even if he cannot do it, it's not a big issue. As long as he is healthy and he strives and tries his best then that is more than enough. But I also don't know how to help him.

Discriminant Function Analysis Results

Following thematic analyses and chi-square tests, discriminant function analyses were performed to determine the extent to which response patterns of each group were unique separately for developmental goals and socialization practices (see Table 3). Only codes mentioned by 20% of mothers in either group were included in the two models.

For mothers' developmental goals, Wilks' lambda showed there was a significant difference between immigrant and local mothers' responses about their developmental goals ($\Lambda = .82, F(10, 90) = 1.97, p = .05$). The Eigenvalue for variance explained was .22 ($F(10, 90) = 1.97, p = .05$).

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Standardized canonical discriminant function coefficients revealed that Obedience and Filial Piety (.79), Autonomy and personal choice (-.48), Child is less shy (.42), and Average or Low Expectations had the highest discriminating abilities. The effect size or squared canonical correlation was .18. The discriminant analysis correctly predicted placement of 94% of immigrant mothers compared to only 60% of local mothers. The total error rate for the prediction model was 23%. These results suggest that developmental goals for immigrant mothers were more distinctive compared to their local counterparts.

A significant difference between immigrant and local mothers' socialization strategies and immigrant/local group membership was also found ($\chi^2=8.2$, $F(8, 92) = 2.54$, $p=.02$). The Eigenvalue for variance explained was .22 ($F(8, 92) = 2.54$, $p=.02$). Standardized canonical discriminant function coefficients uncovered that Provision of academic and cognitive resources (-.74), Academic socialization (.73), and Mother self-improvement and social modeling (-.72) were the variables that contributed most to discriminating between the two groups. The effect size or squared canonical correlation was .18. This second discriminant analysis had a higher error rate of 28%, accurately predicting only 76% of the immigrant group and 68% of the local group. Similar to the results above, the model had greater accuracy in predicting immigrant group membership based on socialization strategies; however, this value was not as high as the one above (developmental goals) suggesting higher variability in mothers' strategies.

DISCUSSION

Our analysis of the interviews from local Hong Kong and Mainland immigrant Chinese mothers revealed foremost the extent that mothers share similar developmental goals and socialization

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strategies despite substantial variation in demographic backgrounds (e.g. education attainment, household income). Cultural models or scripts are organized sets of ideas that are shared by members of a cultural group, passed on through generations, guide parents' interpretations of phenomena, and motivate daily practices (Harkness et al., 2009; Suizzo, 2007). In the present study, mothers' consensus across the majority of these themes suggests that many concepts (e.g. health, happiness, moral character, autonomy support, parental warmth etc.) have shared meaning in Hong Kong.

Although China has been traditionally classified as a collectivist culture with substantial emphasis on connection to family, group harmony, respect, obedience, and relatedness, it was apparent from our findings that Chinese mothers also value autonomy, personal choice, and self-esteem. Researchers often resort to using the individualist-collectivist (I-C) distinction to make sense of the vast cross-cultural differences in parenting research. One substantial limitation of this oversimplified approach is the assumption that individuals are exclusively high or low on either dimension (Triandis, 1988). It is possible for individuals to be socialized in both individualism and collectivism – the likelihood of one of these systems being triggered depends on the situational context (Oyserman, Kemmelmeir & Coon, 2002). Here, we found that although immigrant mothers valued obedience and filial piety; they were no less likely than local mother to use autonomy support practices. Tamis-LeMonda and colleagues (2007) argued that dynamic co-existence can occur and parents can endorse both autonomy and relatedness. We suspect this may be the case in Hong Kong.

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Interestingly, our discriminant function analyses was relatively successful at predicting group membership for immigrant mothers based on parental goals (94%) and less so for local mothers (60%). The analysis was also less accurate for both groups based on socialization strategies. One possibility is that immigrant families have more homogenous experiences and come from more similar cultural backgrounds. Previous research contends that cultural beliefs systems are so fundamental that the vision of what constitutes an adaptive adult endures through cultural changes and even immigration (Rosenthal & Roer-Strier, 2001). Future studies should repeat this study in Mainland China and to see which values persist and which ones change. The discriminant analyses also suggest that there may be less of a distinctive pattern in local mothers' goals and strategies. In the future, we should attempt to tease out the effects of relevant variables (e.g. demographics). Although ethnotheories play an integral role in parenting behaviors, beliefs do not predict with certainty that behavior will occur. The discrepancy in error rates between goals and strategies may be partially explained by this.

As it relates to socialization strategies, older studies report that Chinese mothers use more controlling and authoritarian (characterized by low level of warm, low level of autonomy, and high behavioral control) practices and express lower levels of parental warmth (Chao, 1994; Chao, 2000). Our findings corroborate recent Chinese parenting studies, which point towards a cultural shift to what Way and colleagues (2013) call "social and emotional parenting". Mothers in our study took great care be warm, loving, and supportive. Instead of having fixed expectations, they allow children to direct their own development. As one local mother said, "All I can do is give her some support. Even though I want her to succeed I feel that it is too early to talk about this. Let's say it this way, even though I want her to succeed, at this point I still don't

know what it is that she wants. How can I help her then? I don't know yet. It's still very much dependent on her in these next few years – maybe there is something that plays out that she can say to me that she likes doing this [activity], she feels that this [activity] she has a lot of dedication for. I can give her the opportunity to explore.” Mothers provided guidance, consistent with the Chinese training model (Chao, 1994) but in the context of a loving, supportive relationship.

Finally, many immigrant mothers reported greater usage of social modeling and self-improvement strategies. This personal theory of change encompassed practices such as learning their child's academic curriculum so to assist with homework, making more money to provide children with more opportunities (e.g. extracurriculars), and recruiting the help of experts (e.g. social workers, more experienced friends). A recent study on academic socialization in low income and middle income Chinese immigrant families in the United States found that although middle-SES parents provided more reading engagement and enrichment activities to their preschoolers, immigrant mothers showed stronger beliefs about parental responsibility for education (Yamamoto, Li, & Liu, 2016). Perhaps in the context of immigration to Hong Kong, Mainland mothers are hypervigilant when it comes to their role in leveling the playing field for their children. As it relates to children's shyness, we uncovered a trend where immigrant mothers are more likely than their local counterparts to hope that their children become less shy and more socially competent. These findings suggest potential future avenues for intervention but also highlight the strengths and resilience that low-income immigrant mothers possess.

Limitations

One of the biggest limitations of this study was our inability to tease apart immigrant status, mothers' education, and family household income. The reality of Hong Kong is that the majority of Mainland immigrant Chinese families who cross the border to Hong Kong come so in search of better economic opportunities. Although we made every effort across several waves of recruitment, we struggled with finding a sufficient number of low-income local mothers or affluent immigrant ones. The cross-sectional design also does not permit us to examine how goals and strategies change over time. A longitudinal study will further allow us to explore how goals and strategies shift in response to developmental change. The open-ended format of the interview also does not allow us to say that certain goals and practices aren't important to mothers, simply because they were not mentioned. Finally, our sample consists of only mothers of shy children so we cannot conclude that the same themes would be applicable to non-shy children. Despite these limitations, this study offers important insight into parenting in the context of immigration and adaptation to Hong Kong.

TABLE 1
Mothers' greatest hopes for their child(ren)

<i>Mothers' hopes for their child(ren)</i>	<i>% of mothers (N=101)</i>		<i>Statistical significance^b</i>	<i>Cramer's V</i>
	<i>Hong Kong local mothers^a (n=68)</i>	<i>Mainland immigrant mothers^a (n=33)</i>		
Happiness and psychological well-being	60%	46%	<i>n.s.</i>	<i>.20</i>
Autonomy and personal choice	41%	21%	<i>p=.05</i>	
Health	35%	33%	<i>n.s.</i>	
Morality	28%	21%	<i>n.s.</i>	
Career and educational achievement	22%	21%	<i>n.s.</i>	
Learning virtues and behavior	22%	18%	<i>n.s.</i>	
Average or lower expectations for child(ren)	16%	24%	<i>n.s.</i>	
Emotional regulation	16%	3%	<i>n.s.</i>	
Child is less shy	15%	27%	<i>n.s.</i>	
Social competence	13%	21%	<i>n.s.</i>	
Kindness	13%	15%	<i>n.s.</i>	
Filial piety and obedience	4%	24%	<i>p=.005*</i>	<i>.30</i>

^a % of mothers = no. of mothers who mentioned the following hopes for their child/ no. of mothers who responded to the question.

^b *p* values of chi-square tests of differences between the group

*Fisher's exact test value

TABLE 2
Mothers' socialization practices

<i>Mothers' socialization practices</i>	<i>% of mothers (N=101)</i>		<i>Statistical significance^b</i>	<i>Cramer's V</i>
	<i>Hong Kong local mothers^a (n=68)</i>	<i>Mainland immigrant mothers^a (n=33)</i>		
Autonomy support	50%	30%	<i>n.s.</i>	
Parental warmth	41%	27%	<i>n.s.</i>	
Quality time	31%	21%	<i>n.s.</i>	
Provide sustenance, basic resources	29%	24%	<i>n.s.</i>	
Academic socialization	28%	24%	<i>n.s.</i>	
Provide opportunities	22%	21%	<i>n.s.</i>	
Provide academic and cognitive resources	21%	30%	<i>n.s.</i>	
Moral socialization	19%	12%	<i>n.s.</i>	
Cultivate self-esteem	18%	6%	<i>n.s.</i>	
Provide relaxed environment for development	16%	9%	<i>n.s.</i>	
Mother self-improvement and social modeling	9%	30%	<i>p</i> =.01	.28
Mother does not know	2%	15%	<i>p</i> =.01*	.27

^a % of mothers = no. of mothers who mentioned the following hopes for their child/ no. of mothers who responded to the question.

^b *p* values of chi-square tests of differences between the group

*Fisher's exact test value

Table 3: Discriminant Function Analyses

Discriminant Function Analysis Group Categorization

Groups		Assigned Group Membership Categories*		Error Rate
		<u>Mainland Immigrant</u>	<u>Local Hong Kong</u>	
Developmental Goals				.23
Mainland Immigrant	33	94%	6%	.06
Local Hong Kong	68	40%	60%	.40
Socialization Practices				.28
Mainland Immigrant	33	76%	24%	.24
Local Hong Kong	68	32%	68%	.32

*Correct assignments are in bold

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